We have seen the future and it is... PlayStation 2

Volume 4 • Issue 12 • November 1999

PS Extreme

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION



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The games. The specs. The facts.
8 pages of PS2 coverage inside.



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CTR
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Once he gets behind the wheel, things get ugly.

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS



GREG OFF
OFF@QUAKE.NET

Now comes the hard part...

If you are a regular reader/subscriber, you probably noticed this issue shipped a week or so later than usual. Allow me to extend our apologies for getting it into your hands so late — it wasn't without good reason. We purposefully held off on the production of the magazine in order to bring back as much current and relevant PlayStation 2 information that we could gather, while Dave and I were in Japan during the week of September 13th. Inside, you'll find eight pages of actual game screen shots, hardware specs, last minute news and announcements, and the current list of both Japanese and North American developers and publishers who have signed up to produce gaming content on the black wonderbox. In addition, you'll find our first-impressions on the actual hardware design and the games that were playable, both at the press unveiling and the Tokyo Game Show.

To a gaming geek, such as myself (which pretty much goes for the rest of the Dimension Publishing staff), the unveiling of new console hardware is always something to celebrate. While I feel it's important to focus on the here and now, it's almost impossible not to catch the buzz and excitement that's being bandied about our industry for Sony's amazing PlayStation 2 and its unlimited potential as a gaming machine and so much more. While there haven't been any official announcements for an American launch date (which, most likely, won't come until next year's E3), you can at least try and rest comfortably with the thought that you will most certainly be playing games like Tekken Tag Tournament, Gran Turismo 2000, Dark Cloud and Street Fighter EX3 (among other US launch titles), as well as your favorite DVD movies come the holidays next year. Granted, that seems like an excruciatingly long time to wait (especially with the knowledge that our Japanese counterparts will be playing their brand-new PS2s in March) but, amazing current PlayStation titles like Naughty Dog's Crash Team Racing, Insomniac's Spryo 2 and Capcom's Resident Evil 3 should, at the very least, help ease the pain and make the time go just a little bit faster.

Thanks for reading and we'll see you next month.

EDITOR BIOS

GREG OFF	DAVE WINDING	CHRIS KRAMER	MARK ANDROVICH	ADAM PAVLACKA	ERIC WINDING	DILLION MERZ	ALEX ANDREWS
Now that the PS2 has been officially unveiled, Greg's been acting very peculiar. The other day we found his passport, a Ken Kutaragi mask and a crudely scribbled-out plan to infiltrate Sony of Japan's R&D facilities in his desk drawer. Needless to say, we're keeping him under tight observation.	Dave has spent this month playing Spyro 2 and CTR. The trip to Japan to see PS2 was his highlight of the year. Dave didn't really fit in too well there. He's 6'-4" and was heard to mutter, that "this entire country is in 3/4 scale." He was seen cracking his head on the subway trains, and his knees at the bar and looks sore.	is a man who's ready to slack. He'll work for about an hour, complain for about another hour, eat lunch, play a few games, surf the net, go to the gym to work out, complain for another hour, then go home. Tony Hawk is his hero and so is Buffy, too. All that and he sometimes takes Mondays off for a much needed break.	Mark was the editor of his law school newspaper where he — aw, forget it! He is no longer ashamed to admit that he lacks serious journalism credentials and is not planning to write a book. He's just a regular guy who enjoys playing games and making babies and playing games.	If you want to make money in the stock market, invest in Mountain Dew. So long as there are editors with deadlines, there will be panicking writers who "Do the Dew" on a regular basis in order to squeeze a few more hours into the day. Of course Adam isn't one of these guys, he meets HIS deadlines.	Eric's life recently changed when a fluke phone call from drummer/musician Phil Collins came in while Eric was on order-line duty. Eric & Phil now converse weekly on the state of the economy (Phil earns money, Eric freeloads), and the intricacies of Abe's Oddworld. First, it was Peter Max; now it's Phil.	This month found Dillion hanging out with Belly Dancers and Transformers. Sick of being bogged down with work, it seemed Thousand Arms wasn't able to teach Dillion enough about the fine art of picking up women, as he now has a black eye, 2 false teeth, and an ingrown toe-nail. Thanks chicas!	Alex has been on the road quite a bit lately. Although it can't be confirmed, he was apparently seen at the bay, by Candlestick Park, trying to fish with his Agetec fishing controller. Needless to say, he didn't catch his limit... although he lied and said he did. We have to get this guy off of the redneck games.
CURRENTLY PLAYING							
Mission Impossible, Cloak and Dagger, Metal Gear Solid, Heist.	CTR, Spyro 2, GameDay 2000, NFL 2K, TR4	Tony Hawk Pro Skater, Legacy of Kain, Jet Moto 3	Crash Team Racing... that's it. Why? Look for the official strategy guide!	Wipeout 3, Grandia, Pac-Man World, Crash Team Racing and Un Jammer Lammy	Gran Turismo, NCAA GameBreaker, NFL Blitz 2000, WWF Attitude	Thousand Arms, Air Attack, Tony Hawk, nights by the fireplace with Barry White.	Fishing, bowling, hunting and Nascar games... waiting for a good tabacee spewing sim.

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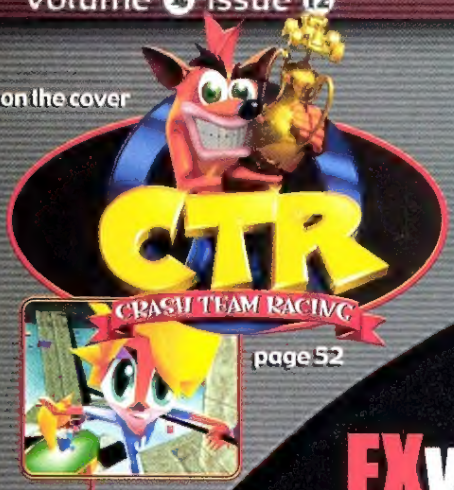
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on the cover



page 52

EXmail

Our readers love us and we love our readers. It's a magazine/reader love-festival. Check out our mail section and you'll see from the mail we get that we are not lying.

12

EXnews

There's a whole mess of good news this issue including informative infos about Pokémon lawsuits, Monster Rancher TV, carmakers for GT2, PS2 as a pay-per-view settop box, a Soccer chick and Lammy in the arcade.

16

EXware

We need to come up with a good, fun song that we can sing about the EXware section. A jingle. A little ditty that kids can sing at school or at home. Who can make a song like that for us? We need someone.



20

EXecute

Oh, wow. The code section really stinks this month. Most of the codes aren't going to work for you, and they're all for old games you don't care about anymore anyway. Just go ahead and move right on to the EXclisive section and forget about EXecute this time. Go. Now. Shoo!

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PAGE



EXclusive

It's the EXclusive you've been waiting for. Real live pictures of the PS2 and stuff. Of course, we wouldn't just stop there. We also have some real cool pics and text for Spyro 2, Air Attack and Twisted Metal 4.

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46

EXcerpt

We really get candid this time. This time it's a long chat with some dude who has something to do with Thrasher's Skate & Destroy. This is big and it's interesting and fun, too.

50



EXtreme

Crash is a bandicoot that has gone all bonkers and nutty with the little racing go-karts that go 'round and 'round the tracks, willy-nilly. Zipping here, zigging there. He's a wacky, crashy, bandi-butt.

60

EXpecting

Most magazines have the kind of preview section that makes you want tear off little pieces to roll up between your thumb and index finger until they're good and mooshy, then flick at your little sister. Not us. We don't use the kind of paper that you can do that with.



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Hardcore, rocking, car blowing up action is what we like.

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Yes! Look at that. Isn't it purty?

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EXcavate

Oh, yeah. EXcavate rocks the magazine with the best listing of games in the whole magazine. We've got a listing of games right up above this description and title, but those are all games in this issue and there's no scores next to them, so the one in back is really better.

100



EXport

Star Ixiom. Rabbit Mon Dieu. It's not Axiom, it's Ixiom. It's not Rabbit, it's Robbit. It's things like these that we make sure to get right. We've been told by certain officials that this sets us apart from the crowd of others who don't make sure of these things.

90

SPorts

It's the season, once again, for frenzied sports enthusiasm. We're enthused about the current sports games that are coming out and want everyone to be as happy as we are about the new sports games for 2000...

70



EXrated

Read these pages where we'll give a numerical and metallic rating to the latest games that are either out in stores now, or will be shortly. Look closely at the score for a particular game, then sit back for a few minutes and decide wether you agree with us or not. We think you will.



Evil moves in next door.

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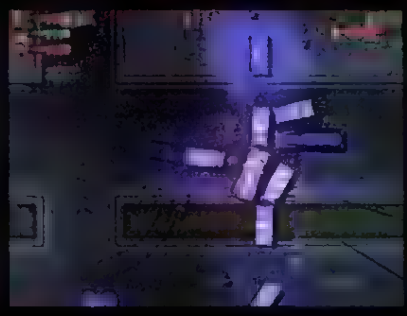
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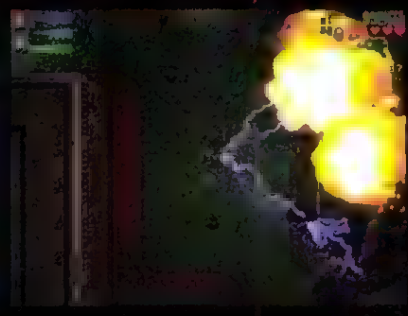
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Grand Theft Auto Is Back.







GTA2

RESPECT IS EVERYTHING.

Hot Topic: More sex, please!

During recent media discussions of videogame violence, I noticed very little mention of one thing — sex. Although television critics often rant against the amount of sex and violence portrayed on the tube, videogame critics complain only about the violence. While sex is used to sell videogames (Agent X-Tra, anyone?), it is rarely a part of videogames. Yet I have noticed that not only do the "T" and "M" ratings provide for suggestive and mature sexual themes, respectively, but there is also an entire category labeled "AO" for Adults Only which applies to games that include a graphic depiction of sex. No console game has ever been released with such a rating, however. Why not? After all, sex is an unavoidable part of life. Whether we remain chaste until marriage or [illegible] almost all of us will eventually have some sort of sexual experience. On the other hand, the vast majority of us will never kill someone. Violence is not a natural part of life, yet it is the primary focus of many videogames.
Actually, I take it back. There are videogames which focus on sex — all those creature breeding games which require players to mix two species and create offspring that take the characteristics of the parents (thankfully, the mating process between those creatures is never depicted). But what about us humans?
It seems [illegible] sexual simulation is going to fall into one of two categories. The first category is a game in which the sex is gratuitous. Players would be rewarded for completing a Tetris by being shown digitized photos of butts and boobs, for example, or such pictures would be in the background of a game just to titillate the audience. Since the sexual element is not integral and the game would sell more copies without it (the under 18 market for videogames is larger than the over 18 market), most companies would nix these type of games for purely financial reasons. The second category is a game where sex itself is the object of the game — a dating and relationship simulation, if you will. The problem in this case is that technology is not capable of accounting for all the nuances, physical feelings and emotions which are present in real-life relationships (sexual or otherwise). These type of videogames denigrate into nothing more than pornography. Instead of a Harlequin romance, we get a smut book.
Comic books, as with videogames, used to be viewed as strictly childhood entertainment. Although American adults still don't accept comics as widely as their Japanese counterparts do, there is finally some recognition that artists and writers can use the medium of comic books to create work which appeals to mature adults. Videogames have yet to make that leap, however, which is a shame. Releasing a few "M" or "AO" titles with sexual themes would go a long way towards erasing the image of videogames as strictly "kiddie" fare.

–Mark Androvich

Dear PSExtreme,

I wanted to thank you for 1) Introducing me into your mag and 2) Letting me know that there is someone out there that lets you know what games are coming out and which games are crap and what games are good And last 3) for making my first and only E3 experience worthwhile. About 2 or 3 years ago E3 was held in L.A. I work in the computer field with business software and have a friend who works in the gaming industry. My friend offered me some tickets to E3 and I was more then happy to get them. We had arranged to meet down at the expo. The big day came so with my 2-year-old I headed off to E3. First parking was a pain but I managed to find a place, second was the walk for 10 blocks with a 2-year-old, this is not a easy thing to do. I got to the expo, and went to the booth to pick up my tickets but found out that my friend did not leave them there for me. I tried to contact him via cell phone but was not able to. After waiting for 2 hours outside of the expo and having paged and still having no luck I had to give up, and I know I would never get thru those great doors to see all the new games coming out that year. I walked around a bit more, then said to myself, "well if I went thru all this trouble to get down here I may as well grab some free stuff." Grabbing flyers and all other stuff, I had not noticed until I had gotten home that you had a stack of your magazines out for free. A few days after the expo I went thru my grab bag of free stuff and saw your mag, and to this day I have been hooked. I must say that your mag is very helpful and keeps me updated on what is going on in the gaming industry, and while I did not get thru the doors to E3 the next best thing was finding your magazine, so I wanted to thank you and yes I know this has been 2 or 3 years in the coming but come on I have kids (Just joking) Keep up the good work over there. On a last note, when I did subscribe to your mag your staff was very friendly and helpful unlike most companies that just want your cold hard cash. Again keep up the good work

Impulse927

Wow. Not much of a friend you have. Sounds like something Greg would do. ;) Thanks for the kind words.

Dear PS Extreme,

Whenever I get my magazine the first thing I do is go to your EXcavate section, and check out the hot new games that are out. I was looking at the platinum category, and was wondering how you gave Syphon Filter a higher rating than Metal Gear Solid. I have played both these games, and think that MGS is far superior compared next to Syphon Filter. Just look at the graphics alone! I had trouble with Syphon's controls;while Snake I was able to maneuver in my sleep! Just give me a little insight on how you made this decision.

Michael Mantese

PS - Your magazine rocks!

There were only two points apart, but regardless, the reviewer of Syphon Filter simply enjoyed playing a little more than the reviewer of Metal Gear Solid. It's perfectly natural for some people to have different tastes in games and some, such as yourself, will like Metal Gear Solid over Syphon Filter. Either that or we're in league with Sony. ;-)

Dear PSExtreme,

I love your magazine. its the bomb. I just got a PlayStation in April. I tried GamePro, Electric Gaming Monthly, PSM, PlayStation Magazine, PSExtreme and that dumb one, EXPERT GAMER. Out of all the magazines, I liked yours and I would like to say something to the guy in the October 1999 issue who said,' I like PlayStation Magazine better, because they have Demos" the guy's name was "BLaZeXII". Now If you are reading this, Their magazine stinks! PlayStation Magazine had to send me a letter in the mail to try to get me to subscribe, but A: their Magazine stinks and B. It costs $39.97. HELLO? That's too much! I turned them down. Well PSExtreme, you guys rock! Hey you guys are better than PlayStation Magazine. You see, I've been tracking Dino Crisis and I checked out PlayStation Magazine's coverage. Well they don't have one page worth reading. I looked at your article WOW! There were two pages of Dino Crisis. You guys had more info than PlayStation Magazine. I just wanted to express what I think of your magazine! YOU'RE THE BOMB!

Your PS EXTREME #1 fan,
James Brosher

James, we're mighty glad you picked us over the competition. It warms our hearts inside. However, we're not always going to have more coverage on a particular game than the other guys. Maybe one month they're going to have two pages on a game, and we'll only have a half-pager. Other months we'll have a ten-page walkthrough and they'll have a one-page preview. We would hope you enjoy our magazine for the superior content overall, not just the coverage on a certain game.

Dear PSExtreme,

I have yet to understand how you folks at PSExtreme rate the two top football dawgs, MADDEN (the king of videogame football) and GAMEDAY (the young and tough) titles. Over the past two years Madden has gotten an unfair shake at PSEx but I have to say this year the choice is crystal clear.
GD 2000 seems to have been rushed. The game play is very jerky and the frame rate is even slower than that of Madden 2000. I never have liked the play selection screen on GD since they change it to what it is today. Shame on you 989. The "create player" set up is funny

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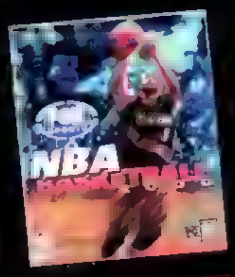
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Please. "Super player?". Come on guys, the Madden method is the best and it's proven that over the past few years. As for graphics... once again, Madden 2000 out shines GD 2000. The "Blitz" look 989 decided to use is more like a muscle beach party in shoulder pads than a football game Let's also not forget the frame smoothness. Madden 2000 drives GD 2000 into the turf!

I know you folks seem to have something against Madden but this year there is no doubt, MADDEN 2000 is the king of football. No question. I can't wait to see how these two games fair in your ratings. I'd have to say this year you Madden haters will have to eat pig skin and fess up! Make mine MADDEN!

Deron

Well, we rated the two last issue. What did you think of Dave's assessment? He gave the propers to Madden, but still rated GameDay higher. Does this anger you, or were you won over to the GD side by Dave's astute analytical skills? Hmmmm? Tell us. Inquiring magazines need to know!

Dear PSExtreme,

You know, it is great that Sony decided to release GameDay 2000 a couple weeks early, but I would have really preferred if they would've spent a couple more weeks on it and worked the kinks out. The core of the game is awesome, but it is way too unpolished. I've played it for 3 days now, and here are the bugs that I've noticed so far:

1) Every time one of my players gets injured, Dick Enberg says he is number 76.
2) Players are equally fatigued whether they have been playing or not. Completely takes the point out of substitution.
3) The Statistics say that my team has caused 0 fumbles, but yet I am leading the league in fumble recoveries.
4) Play Editor function does not work in Season Mode. I'm not sure how widespread this one is. I called the people at Sony about it, and they said a few other people have this problem, but I guess it isn't in every game. I suppose I'm just unlucky.
5) Instruction book says you can turn the salary cap on/off, but you can't.
6) Some of the substitutions don't "stick" (kick returner)
7) 50% of the time I get a safety I will get called for offsides when the computer kicks off to me. Then, I really get screwed because the CPU gets the ball back for some reason.
8) If you intercept a ball and return it for a TD, the drive summary will be all screwed up.
9) Release enough players from your team and the free agent pool will become filled up.
10) I'm up by 40 points, miss an extra point, and Dickey boy says "that will be costly".
11) Why do X and L2+X do the exact same thing?
12) Some Rookies don't have names, regardless of whether they have been signed or not.
13) Receivers can catch the ball in the air, land with both feet 3 yards out of bounds, and it will count as a catch.
14) No forward motion. Nothing more annoying than diving for a first down, getting it by two yards, but then getting kicked back 7 yards while I'm still on the ground to lose the first down
15) Went undefeated in my season, but still had to play my playoff games on the road
16) Ocassionally get called for intentional grounding when I have completed a pass.

There they are. I really don't think there is any excuse for these relatively simple things not being fixed. Madden doesn't have all these idiosyncrasies, does it? Maybe it does, and I've just never played it enough to find them.

Later,
Mike

Whoa there partner! Don't you go bad-mouthing the big GD, now, pally. Those are all features you don't seem to realize you wanted. 989 has taken the "Microsoft" approach to software development. It's worked great for them, hasn't it? Stop complaining and start conforming. But seriously... we have not experienced the rash of problems that you seem to be having, or have we had any other reports of problems of this nature (other than Dick Enberg... what are you going to do?). Have you tried exchanging it for a new copy?

Dear PS Extreme,

I recently picked up one of my old PSExtreme mags, March of 99, volume 4 issue 4. I was reading some of the X-mail and notice that once again PlayStation thinks they are the best to walk this earth.

Putting down the Sega Dreamcast, saying that Sonic was a disappointment and it was "Flea Like", what the hell is that? And lacking precise control and bad camera angles, and no real sense of adventure. You must be talking about the Japanese version, cuz I played the American one, and all I have to say is PlayStation 2 better do some neat tricks with it's gay mascot "Crash Bandicoot", when I've played it and that game was just a fixed path like most PlayStation games... Sonic for one is the best damned game I've ever had to put my beautiful fingertips upon. And the other games, like Ready 2 Rumble and Soul Caliber, pretty much beat out anything I've ever seen, and Shenmue, which will be out at Christmas, actually beats out anything I've seen for PS2...Yes, PS2 will beat Dreamcast as far as graphics, but they can't produce games like Sega has done over the past. Don't even mention Final Fantasy 7 or 8 cuz they both are just button pushers just to show you the next video clip... nothing more and nothing less... And quite frankly, PSX has sucked since 96, that one year after it's release, the only good games for it were Resident Evil and D. And those games are being brought over to the Dreamcast, and Resident Evil is now sporting a first person view along with 3rd person...So don't think PSX or PS2 is the best...Cuz they aren't...Cuz Sega is gonna be on the Map for eternity *CENSORED*!... oh yea...Quote " Papa Donk Donkz" close quotes..

Thanks for listening
Ryan A.K.A. Da Juggalo

Of course we were talking about the Japanese version, numbnut. It was the April 99 issue and the Japanese version was the only one available to play. The Japanese launch of the Dreamcast was a big disappointment. We were hoping for some amazing games and we got Blue Stinger, Godzilla and a buggy 3D Sonic. Stinky dingo-smell! Well, the U.S. launch has come and gone, and they did manage to get some great games out the door. Hey, here's an idea. Instead of limiting yourself to what Sega brings you, why not buy all the systems and play all the best games from each? Then you can direct your fury toward the people who deserve it; the ones who are trying to get you to buy dingo-stinky games, not the companies who are making the hardware to play them on. You're knocking your head against a brick wall if you're going to go around trying to convince people one company is better than another. Life is constantly changing, friend Juggalo. There's never been only one system to play. When at first there was Atari, there was also Colecovision and Vectrex, all with great games to play. Then Nintendo stepped in with the NES and Sega came along with the Master System and they both had awesome games to play. It was good to have both. Next Nintendo brought us the SNES and Sega the Genesis, and there was the Jaguar 3DO, etc. Once again, gamers were treated to a great variety of good games (as well as plenty of stinkers all around). Then the PSX came knocking, and Sega and Nintendo answered with the Saturn and N64. Saturn had some good games, but Sega had their collective heads in their proverbial rears and it died quickly, but they all still brought some great games to play. Now, we are reaching another period of change, and the Dreamcast will bring good games, but PS2 and others (Dolphin??) will also soon come, and they will all have an abundance of fun games to play. Buy them all and you may become a happy gamer instead of a bitter system basher.

Dear PS Extreme,

I want to talk about the Sega Dreamcast, let me start out by saying that most real gamers play multiple systems, I have a Sony Playstation, a Neo-Geo Pocket Color, a 366mhz PC, and most recently a Sega Dreamcast. Now to all those who have been rippin' on the Dreamcast for the last month, if you want to sit around and bash Sega's latest gaming platform, fine! But if the Sony Playstation is all that you play games on then you my friends are uncool. You can't judge a system limiting yourself to only one gaming platform, besides; having multiple systems at market is better for us consumers, the games are better, prices are lower, and the support is greater. So if you are waiting for the Playstation 2, give Dreamcast some slack, because without it you could be paying a fortune for it.

A TRU-GAMER

What? Were you looking over our shoulders when we were typing our last reply?? You hit the nail right on the shoulder! You must have ESPN.

Address all mail to:
E XM AIL
Dimension Publishing
1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
Foster City, CA 94404
e-mail: d3@quake.net
You can bug Greg now.
OFF@quake.net

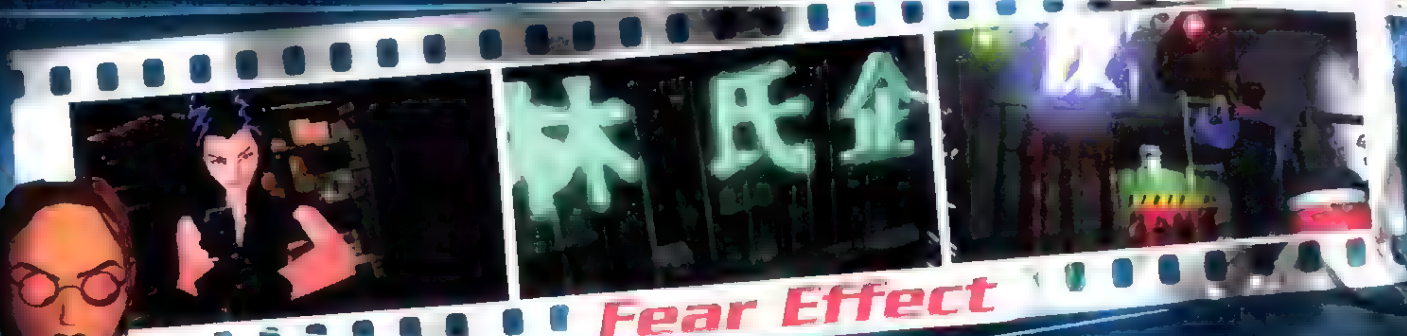
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from around the globe

NEWS EDITOR: CHRIS KRAMER

Land of the Free, Home of the Litigious (that means "tending to engage in lawsuits," dummy)

What a great country we live in. After having spent a week in Japan in mid-September in order to dribble across the lids of the first production PlayStation 2 systems, the PS Extreme editorial staff has decided that the US — and particularly California — is the greatest place on earth. After spending a week eating the weird runny eggs that the Japanese prefer for breakfast (ick), riding super-packed subways and forking out eight dollars per beer in the local bars, we were more than ready to return to our homes in the Golden State.

One of the many things that we love the US is our sue-happy populace. Take, for instance, the San Diego brain trust of Milberg, Weiss, Bershad, Hynes, and Lerach. Milberg et. al., a Southern California lawfirm, recently filed a suit against Nintendo and Wizards of the Coast, claiming that the Pokemon card game produced by WotC under license from the Big N is nothing more than legalized gambling. Wha?

Yes, today, the lawyers want to sue Nintendo and Wizards of the Coast because they claim that the secret agenda behind the Pokemon card game is to force kids to buy more and more cards in the effort to collect all the most valuable Pokemon. Since the card decks are all random, kids have to purchase many packs in order to "score" all the elusive Holo buggers. Roddy was quoted in online newspaper SignOnSanDiego.com as saying, "If you have a chance element, from our point of view, it's illegal gambling. It's nothing more than a lottery disguised as a kids' game."

Here's some rocket science for you. All this time, we were thinking that Nintendo and Wizards of the Coast were charitable, non-profit organizations that gave away their merchandise to needy children. Here we come to find out that — gasp! — they're actually evil big businesses who are out to exploit

Yes, we may be a bit cynical, relative to the PlayStation, but we here at PS Extreme were still very disappointed to find out that both companies actually try to make a buck. We were also suitably horrified to find that children are actually being forced to pay for trading cards. Why, we remember back in the Old Days (the 1970's), when the kids in the neighborhood never had to pay for Star Wars cards and Wacky Packs because the friendly merchants gave them away. Actually, we never had to pay for those cards because we were stealing them, but that's neither here nor there. So what do the lawyers intend to do with any sort of money they might wring out of Nintendo and WotC? This is obviously a "let's both sides settle" case, where Milberg & Henchmen hope that the two companies simply fork over some dough just to get rid of them. Where would that money go? Would the law firm use the settlement money to establish a host of Pokemon Addiction treatment centers around the US where poor, defrauded kiddies can go to overcome their disappointment in finding out that being a PokeMaster doesn't amount to crap in the real world? Or would Kevin Roddy be given a bigger German luxury car in which to tool around San Diego? Responsible journalism dictates that we should contact Milberg, Weiss, Bershad, Hynes, and Lerach to hear their side of the story, but fortunately, we're neither responsible, nor are we journalists. Instead, we shall mock them.

What's the matter with people? Why does the justice system tolerate obvious parasites and their complete nonsense? I'm sure it's extreme to label lawyers as scumbags, but that label does become a little more easy to understand when reading about things like this. As it turns out, by the way, this isn't Milberg, Weiss, Bershad, Hynes, and Lerach's ninth lawsuit against a trading card company, having previously blasted Upper Deck, Topps, Major League Baseball and the National Football League. I think that the overall mood in the room was perfectly summed up by one, Bob Pockrass, Defending America's Lunch Money [illegible]

And Speaking of Pokemon...

While America is gripped in the midst of Poke-Frenzy, there are a number of other companies angling to get their piece of the pie. You may have already come across the Digi-Mon cartoon, which is running in most markets and actually has decent quality animation, but even weaker stories than Nintendo's little yellow cash cow. Now Teemo wants in and are putting their "muse" to good fight with Monster Rancher to the ultimate test, kiddy TV.

Fledgling Bobbet Kids Network (does anyone get this channel?) began showing episodes of Monster Rancher five times a week — surprise! — just as Digi-Mon had. Monster Rancher? Funny how that works.

Monster Rancher (the cartoon) follows Hamtaro, a young boy transported to the kooky Monster Rancher world. There he must use stone discs to breed monsters in his effort to become the greatest monster breeder in the world. Yes, it all sounds suspiciously familiar, right down to the baseball cap Hamtaro wears. Perhaps Milberg, Weiss, Bershad, Hynes, and Lerach would like to flex their legal muscles on a copyright infringement case? Didn't think so.

Gran Turismo 2 Car List

For those of you who just can't wait to start racing around in circles, and who cannot possibly wait for the entire license list from Sony's upcoming racing sim Gran Turismo 2, while this isn't a complete list (there are going to be upwards of 400 different cars for you to unlock), it should give you a taste of the types of cars that you'll be able to get through their paces. Note the inclusion of many more American and European manufacturers this year, no doubt included after the huge success of the game outside Japan.

- Alfa Romeo • Aston Martin • Audi • BMW • Chevrolet
- Chrysler • Citroen • Dodge • Fiat • Ford • Honda
- Jaguar • Lancia • Lister • Lotus • Mazda • Mercedes-Benz
- Mercury • MG • Mini • Mitsubishi • Nissan • Opel
- Peugeot • Plymouth • Renault • RUF • Shelby • Subaru
- Toyota • TVR • Vector • Venturi • Volkswagen

PS2 As Cable and Game Pay-Per-View Box!

It's no state secret that the PlayStation 2 is intended to be much more than a simple video game system. Although Sony has been vehement in dodging the "set-top box" tag (mostly because it's such a lame and dated idea), the company's commitment to support "broadband technology" — cable modems and DSL lines — when it becomes more readily available was a definite talking point at the PS2 press conference in Tokyo.

That concept was given more credence this week following the press conference when Japanese newspaper The Nihon Keizai Shimbun ran an interesting interview with Ken Kutaragi, head honcho of Sony Computer Entertainment. In the article, Kutaragi revealed plans for Sony to begin production and distribution of digital movies sometime in the beginning of the next Millennium, most likely around '02 or '03. Kutaragi even namechecked George Lucas as one of the people they've begun talking to about the future of digital entertainment.

In a similarly related press release, Sony also revealed that they plan to use the PS2 as "a platform for Internet-based electronic distribution of digital content in 2001." Sony hopes to establish "broadband distribution of digital content, beginning with the PlayStation and PlayStation 2 libraries." Sony is hoping that, by pairing the PS2 with a fast Internet connection, you'll be able to pay for and download games to hard disc drives that will be able to plug into the PS2's IEEE 1394, USB or PCMCIA ports. Sony plans to use an electronic transaction system, which means it should be simple for Junior to filch Mom's credit card and run up a really nasty bill downloading games into his PlayStation 2.

Just When You thought The Soccer Chick Frenzy Had Faded...

We've had pictures of hot, sweaty athletic babes wearing nothing more than a bra and short-shorts, but even we've grown tired of the photos of what's-her-name scoring the game winning shot during this past Summer's overrated soccer-thingie in LA. Now that even Letterman has gone back to touching female guest's knees instead of licking his chops over thoughts of the US Women's Soccer team, we figured that the whole "Hoorah for Women's Soccer!" movement had died down. Not while EA's got something to say about it, friends.

Electronic Arts has revealed to the world that Julie Foudy will be providing some serious babe-factor commentary in FIFA 2000: Major League Soccer. For the record, Foudy was not the one who whipped off her shirt after scoring the winning goal. That was Brandi Chastain. Foudy was captain of the team and managed to keep her clothes on throughout the World Cup. Julie Foudy has done commentary for ABC, ESPN and ESPN2, but [illegible] finally learned and screamed "Goooooooooooal!!!!!!!" like that one guy on Telemundo does.

[illegible] is now out for the U.K., France, Germany and those other less important, European countries where soccer is actually considered a sport, the [illegible] Summer is over in the United States and we've got real teams to pay attention to again.

Lammy Rocks the Arcade

A new [illegible] arcade inspired by the PS Dreams and [illegible] Bust A Groove. Essentially, the game is the PlayStation version, the arcade game [illegible] challenging other players to public dance-a-thons. Japanese newspaper Nikkei Industrial Daily reports that Um Jammer Lammy might soon be following in Bust A Groove's dancin' shoes, thanks to Namco.

Unlike the plain old PlayStation version of Lammy, where you simply whack away on the butions, Namco's plans include creating a unique guitar controller for the arcade game. One could only imagine that it would be much the same as the controller Konami created for their rock game, Guitar Freaks. This will also be the first time that a Sony-developed game has moved out of the home console and into the arcades.

top Selling titles

SEPTEMBER, 1999

WEEKS ONE AND TWO (9/20-9/11)

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** Not in Top 10 Last Month


SuperCross Circuit
BURY THE
That's
Supercross/Motocross Tracks
Glen Helen Raceway
Spring Creek Motocross Park
Washougal Motocross Park
Unadilla Valley
Budds Creek Motocross Park
Kenworthys Motocross Park
Highpoint Raceway
Southwick
Hangtown Raceway
Steel City Raceway
Qualcomm
Bank One Ballpark
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Metrodome
Astrodome
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PlayStation
EVERYONE
E
IDOL MINDS

COMPETITION.

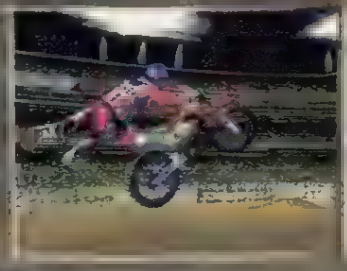
what the dirt's for.











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989 SPORTS



EXware

While most of the accessories reviewed in EXware are pretty standard stuff, it is important to keep an eye out for items that "break the mold" a bit. An example is the PC Works review featured in this issue. It sure isn't a PlayStation specific speaker set, but a simple adapter has it working great with any PSX system. Keep this in mind when you're searching for that perfect accessory. Just because it doesn't have a PSX label slapped on it, doesn't mean it can't work.

Another accessory, the Home Arcade System, got me to wondering how some of the more creative folks out there have their gaming systems setup. So as a result, we have EXware contest #3. Send in a picture of your "ultimate gaming rig." The best setup will win a mystery prize.

Keep the questions coming - psexware@aol.com.

PC Works

Manufacturer: Cambridge Soundworks

MSRP: $49.95



Not everyone is lucky enough to have a stereo system connected to his or her PlayStation. Scary as it sounds, I'm sure some of you are still using an RF modulator with an old monaural television. If you are a person missing out

Although the PC Works speaker set is technically a PC accessory, the inclusion of a stereo mini stereo to male RCA adapter from Radio Shack (or other electronics outlet of your choice) allows it to work splendidly with a PSX.

Consisting of two small satellite speakers, a powered subwoofer, and a headphone jack on the subwoofer, the PC Works set isn't much to look at. In fact, when you first open the box you are likely to wonder why you just spent $50 on such a diminutive set of speakers. Once you hook them up though, you will realize they are well worth the cost.

Available in black or beige, the speakers are very unobtrusive. The satellites weigh just a pound each, are portable, and the mini stereo connector allows you to easily connect the set to other devices, such as a portable CD player. The PC Works speakers are magnetically shielded so you can place the satellites right next to your television without worry of interference.

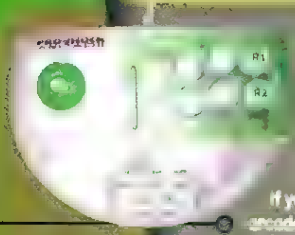
The PC Works speakers put out an amazing amount of volume for their size. Although they will not shake the room, it will give you a definite sense of "being there." If you don't yet have a stereo connected to your PSX, give the PC Works set some thought.

The only problem the speakers didn't get a Platinum is because you can't connect a controller without the adapter. Here's hoping that Cambridge, or some other manufacturer, realizes that the console community needs good speakers and makes a set specifically for us.

Pro-Shock Arcade

Manufacturer: Blaze

MSRP: $34.95



If you play fighting games, you understand the need for a good arcade stick.

The standard PlayStation controller works for action and platform games, but when it comes to [illegible] the lack of control for the diagonal [illegible] moves. Granted, you can use the shoulder buttons, but it just isn't the same.

[illegible] the Pro-Shock Arcade uses standard PCB contact (no micro-switches here) but they are oversized and spring back just as [illegible]. The Pro-Shock Arcade also has a standard mouse port for [illegible] support.

The small size of the Pro-Shock Arcade makes it a perfect lap joystick. This is a nice unit if you have limited space. The control stick is a short metal rod, capped by a plastic sphere. Because the stick is short, you control the joystick with your wrist, [illegible] thumb and forefinger.

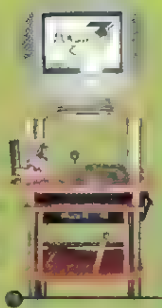
The only problem with the Pro-Shock Arcade is the lack of a weighted bottom. Because the unit [illegible] nothing to anchor it down. [illegible] likely to move the stick while playing.

[illegible] the Pro-Shock Arcade play fairly well. [illegible] Pro-Shock Arcade is a perfect choice.

Home Arcade System

Manufacturer: Blaze

MSRP: $79.95



The Home Arcade System is a great way to show off your PlayStation, especially if you have a spare television that is used solely for gaming.

Consisting of five separate shelves, the Home Arcade System can hold a monitor, a PSX, two standard controllers, an arcade stick, a steering wheel, and 25 PSX games; all of this in a unit with a footprint of less than four square feet. With a monitor, the unit stands approximately four to five feet high.

[illegible] about finding a temporary place to secure a peripheral.

[illegible] to play comfortably.



[illegible] loaded with a large number of cheats – you can add in new cheats manually, you can [illegible] quite as good. The memory card storage system in the Xplorer FX is a "bank swapping" method, unlike the Game Shark Pro's direct save method. Also, the PC connection kit for [illegible]



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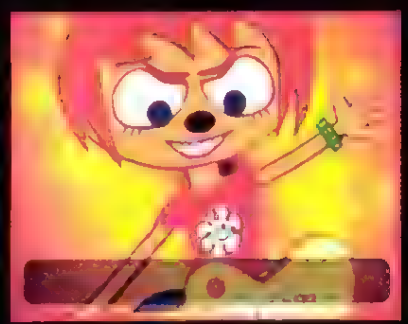
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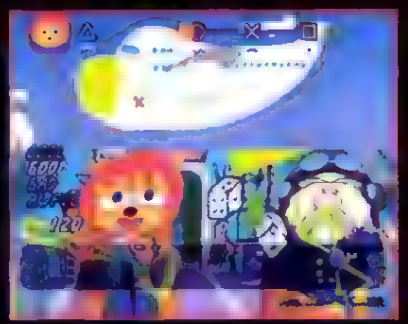
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EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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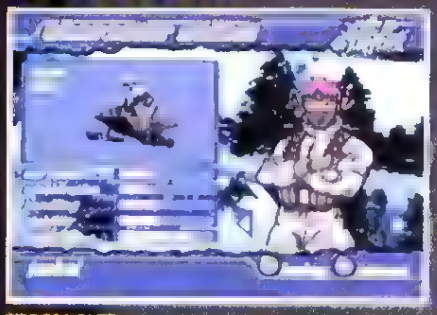
SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of AGETEC's hot destruction game for the PlayStation, Armored Core: Project Phantasma or, if you're funky-funky, fresh, AGETEC's ASCII Sphere 360 (you decide). But wait! That's not all: if you act now, we'll also include AGETEC's super stylish ASCII Grip one-handed controller for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the first, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

A soft and fuzzy thank-you this month to Patrix Cox from Orange Park, FL. Patrick submitted so many codes for this issue and the last, we're considering firing Toolie and hiring him!

Sled Storm



STORM SLED

Enter the options screen, select the load/save option, and display the password screen. Then, enter ○, △, □, R2, R1, L1, ✕, △ as a password to unlock the Storm Sled in single race mode.

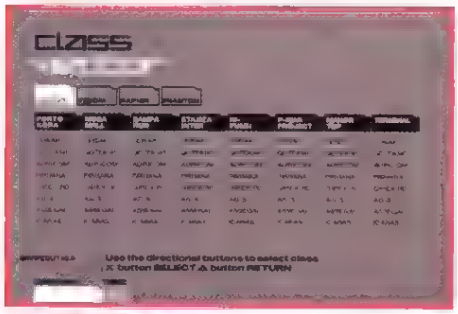
PLAY AS JACKAL

Enter the options screen, select the load/save option, and display the password screen. Then, enter L2, L2, ○, R2, □, R1, L1, △ as a password.

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age and gender, the dog, cousin, and eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or AGETEC, their immediate family, pets and anyone they talk to or know at. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive, then we will choose for you.

It has come to our attention that some of the codes submitted by our readers were out-and-out stolen directly from www.cheatcc.com and other web sites. This is not cool. If you're going to submit a code, you have to explain how to do the code in your own words. You cannot just copy/paste the text from someone's web site and claim it as your own. This is plagiarism. Get with it, peeps. Don't make yousalf look silly in print.

Wipeout 3



4 PLAYER LINK-UP MODE

Load the game on two linked PlayStations. Select "Options", then "Game Setup", then "Default Names", and "Default Name Player One". Change the default name on both PlayStations to LINK. The screen will flash to confirm correct code entry. Choose the new "Establish Link" selection on the options screen on both PlayStations. The first PlayStation to enable this option will be set as the master, and the other PlayStation will be designated the slave. Select the number of players (up to two per PlayStation), then choose a single race or eliminator mode (on the master PlayStation). If a single race was selected, choose a class and track. Select a vehicle to start the race.

CHEAT NAMES:

Enter a code below as a "Default Name":
Unlock All Tracks: WIZZPIG
Extra Vehicles: JAZZNAZ
Phantom Class: AVINIT

Codes submitted by Patrick Cox

NFL Blitz 2000



HIDDEN PLAYERS

Enter Name For Record Keepingwith one of the following player names and PIN numbers.

Name	Number
ALEC	1197
ALIEN	1111
AOB	1111
AUBREY	7777
AZPOD	4777
BETH	7761
BILLZ	0526
BOXER	2111
BRAIN	1111
BRIAN	2221
BRIAN	0818
CALEB	0996
CARLTN	1111
CURTIS	1111
DANIEL	0604
DAVID	3333
DBN	6969
DINO	1111
ED	3246
EDDIE	3333
FORDEN	1111
FRANZ	1010
GATSON	1111
GENE	0310
GENTIL	1111
GRINCH	0222
GRINCH	2220
GUIDO	2222
GUIDO	6765
GUMBY	8698
JAPPLE	6660
JASON	3141
JEFF	1111
JENIFR	3333
JIMK	5651
JOHN	5158
JOSH	4288
JOVE	6644
LEX	7777
LT	7777
LUIS	3333
MARKA	1112
MIKE	3333
MITCH	4393
MONTY	1836
MOOSE	1111
MXV	1014
NATHAN	0515
NICO	4440
PAULA	0425
PAULO	0517
PIRATE	1111
PUNKB	2112
PUNKR	1221
RAIDEN	3691
RALPH	1111
RANDU	6666
ROG	8148
ROOT	6000
RYAN	1029
SAD	1111
SAL	0201
SHINOK	8337
SHRUNK	6666
SHUN	0530
SKULL	1111
SMILE	1111
THUG	1111
TODD	1122
TREX	1111
TURMEL	0322
VAN	1234
WHODAT	1844
ZZ	1221

CHEAT CODES

Press Turbo, Jump, and Pass to change the icons. The numbers indicate the number of times to press each button. Press the D-pad in the direction to enable the code. If entered correctly, you will see the name and hear a sound.

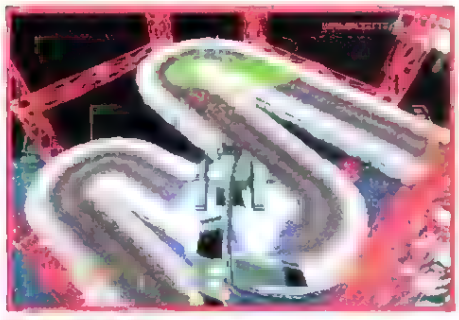
Cheat	Combination
Infinite turbo	5-1-4 Up
Fast turbo running	0-3-2 Left
Power-up offense	3-1-2 Up
Power-up defense	4-2-1 Up
Power-up teammates	2-3-3 Up
Power-up blockers	3-1-2 Left
Super blitzing	0-4-5 Up

Super field goals.....1-2-3 Left
No interceptions.....3-4-4 Up
No random fumbles.....4-2-3 Down
No first downs.....2-1-0 Up
No punting.....1-5-1 Up
Green Bay Packers playbook.....1-2-2 Left
Allow stepping out of bounds.....2-1-1 Left
Fast passes.....2-5-0 Left
Turn off stadium.....5-0-0 Left
Late hits.....0-1-0 Up
Show field goal %.....0-0-1 Down
Show punt hang meter.....0-0-1 Right
Use team plays.....1-0-0 Up
Hide receiver name.....1-0-2 Right
Invisible receiver highlight.....3-3-3 Left
Invisible.....4-3-3 Up
Big football.....0-5-0 Right
Big head.....2-0-0 Right
Huge head.....0-4-0 Up
No head.....3-2-1 Left
Headless team.....1-2-3 Right
Team tiny players.....3-1-0 Right
Team big players.....1-4-1 Right
Team big heads.....2-0-3 Right
No play selection [Note 1].....1-1-5 Left
Show more field [Note 1].....0-2-1 Right
No CPU assistance [Note 1].....0-1-2 Down
Power-up speed [Note 1].....4-0-4 Left
Hyper blitz [Note 1].....5-5-5 Up
Smart CPU opponent [Note 2].....3-1-4 Down
Tournament mode [Note 3].....1-1-1 Down
Always quarterback [Note 4].....2-2-2 Left
Always receiver [Note 4].....2-2-2 Right
Old day stadium.....5-0-1 Up
Day stadium.....5-0-1 Down
City stadium.....5-0-1 Left
Old night stadium.....5-0-2 Up
Night stadium.....5-0-2 Down
Future stadium.....5-0-2 Left
Old snow stadium.....5-0-3 Up
Snow stadium.....5-0-3 Down
Roman stadium.....5-0-3 Left
Grass field.....3-0-0 Up
Asphalt field.....3-0-1 Up
Dirt field.....3-0-2 Up
Astroturf field.....3-0-3 Up
Snow field.....3-0-4 Up
Fog on.....0-3-0 Down
Thick fog on.....0-4-1 Down
Weather: clear.....2-1-1 Left
Weather: snow.....5-2-5 Down
Weather: rain.....5-5-5 Right
Night game.....0-2-2 Right

Note 1: Two players must agree.
Note 2: Only in 1 player game
Note 3: Only in 2 player game.
Note 4: Two human players required.

Codes submitted by Robert Pulaski

G.Police 2



UNLIMITED AMMO:

Start a new game and on the weapons screen, press L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 + ◎. You will hear a sound if you entered the code correctly.

Codes submitted by Robert Pulaski

Trick 'n Snowboarding



RESIDENT EVIL CHARACTERS

At the Title Screen press △, △, ⊗, ⊗, □, ◎, □, and ◎. You should hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Then go into Free Mode and press either L2 or R2. Now you can select from Leon, Claire, and Zombie.

Codes submitted by Robert Pulaski

RC Stunt Copter



Enter the following codes at the main menu screen. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a voice

UNLOCK TRAINING LEVELS
↓, ↑, ←, →, △, ⊗, □, ◎

UNLOCK ALL LEVELS
↓, ↑, →, ←, △, ⊗, □, ◎

LONG NAME
↑, ↓, ←, →, △, ⊗, □, ◎

MEGA POINTS
L2, R2, L1, R1, △, ◎, ⊗, □

END MOVIE
↑, ↓, ←, →, ⊗, □, ◎, △

Codes submitted by Robert Pulaski

NHL 2000

LAUGH AT OPPOSITION:



Press △ after scoring a goal to laugh at the other team.

Codes submitted by Robert Pulaski

Send all code submissions to:

EXECUTE

Dimension Publishing
1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
Foster City, CA 94404
or email us at: d3@quake.net

GAME SHARK Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codez right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Warning: These codes won't work without a Game Shark. For the latest codez and info, get on the internet and check www.gameshark.com, www.cmgscc.com or www.datel.co.uk. If you find a code doesn't work, you may need to upgrade your Game Shark. Check your instruction manual for details.
(Most of these codes are "unofficial" and may or may not work correctly at all. Use at your own risk.)

DRIVER (GameShark v3.2)
Regular Game Codes
No Damage 8009AEE0 0000
Felony Bar Is Empty 800973C8 0000
Stop Timer 800C6E62 D600
..... 800C6E64 0F28
[illegible] D0096DB4 0044
..... 8009AE54 FFFF
Score Meter Maxed 800C6EA0 06A4
Bomb Never Blows Up 80097428 0000
Pile Mode (*1) D0096DB4 000C
..... 8009AD96 012C
Misc. Codes
Have All Flags 800C6C94 0064
Enable All Tracks 800964A0 0004
Invincibility Cheat ..... 80086414 FFFE
..... 80086416 FFFF
[illegible] ..... 8008644C FFFE
..... 8008644E FFFF
[illegible] ..... 80086484 FFFE
..... 80086486 FFFF
[illegible] ..... 800864BC FFFE
..... 800864BE FFFF
[illegible] ..... 800864F4 FFFE
..... 800864F6 FFFF
Antipodean Cheat ..... 80086564 FFFE
..... 80086566 FFFF
Low Rider Mode ..... 8009ADAA FFFF
Low Gravity Mode 8009D5A8 0001
Backwards Mode 8009D5B0 0001
Last Track + Start Last Lap ..... D00C6CA8 00?0
..... 800C6CA8 0002
[illegible] D00C6C94 0000
..... 800C6C94 0004
Drive Thru Walls 8004B9DE 1000
Unlock All 4 Cities 00964A0 0004
..... 800964B8 0046
..... 800964D4 0001
[illegible] 80096468 0000
..... 8009646C 0000
[illegible] 80096460 0000
..... 80096462 0000
Smoke without damage ..... 8009AE7C FFFF
Back tires smoke ..... 8009AE70 FFFF
Burn Rubber (Square + Tri) ..... 8009AE68 FFFF
[illegible] 8009AE72 0000
..... 8009AE80 0000
..... 8009AE82 0000
..... 8009AE84 0000
..... 8009AE90 0000
..... 8009AE92 0000
..... 8009AE94 0000
..... 8009AE96 0000
..... 8009AE78 0000
..... 8009AE7A 0000
..... 8009AE7C 0000
..... 8009AE88 0000
..... 8009AE8A 0000
..... 8009AE8C 0000
Falling Cars (*1) ..... 8009C970 FFFF
Headlight Mode ..... 80096DA8 00??
No Cops In Survival Mode ..... 80097424 FFFF
Always Night ..... 80097468 FFFF
Nitro +Low Gravity (Note 13) 8009AE56 0000
Super Felony Bar 800973C8 7FFF
Drunk Mode (1st-Person) 800AF368 F005
..... 8009D5AC 0001

*1: With this code, press L1 + R1 to flip your car in the air till you land back on all four wheels.
*2: Press square for nitro. When you shut this code off you change the regular game and now you have very low gravity without a code ever [illegible]









The best video game soundtrack ever compiled featuring groundbreaking classics from hip hop pioneers such as:

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GRANDMASTER FLASH

RUN DMC

PUBLIC ENEMY

ULTRAMAGENTIC MC'S

STETSASONIC

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

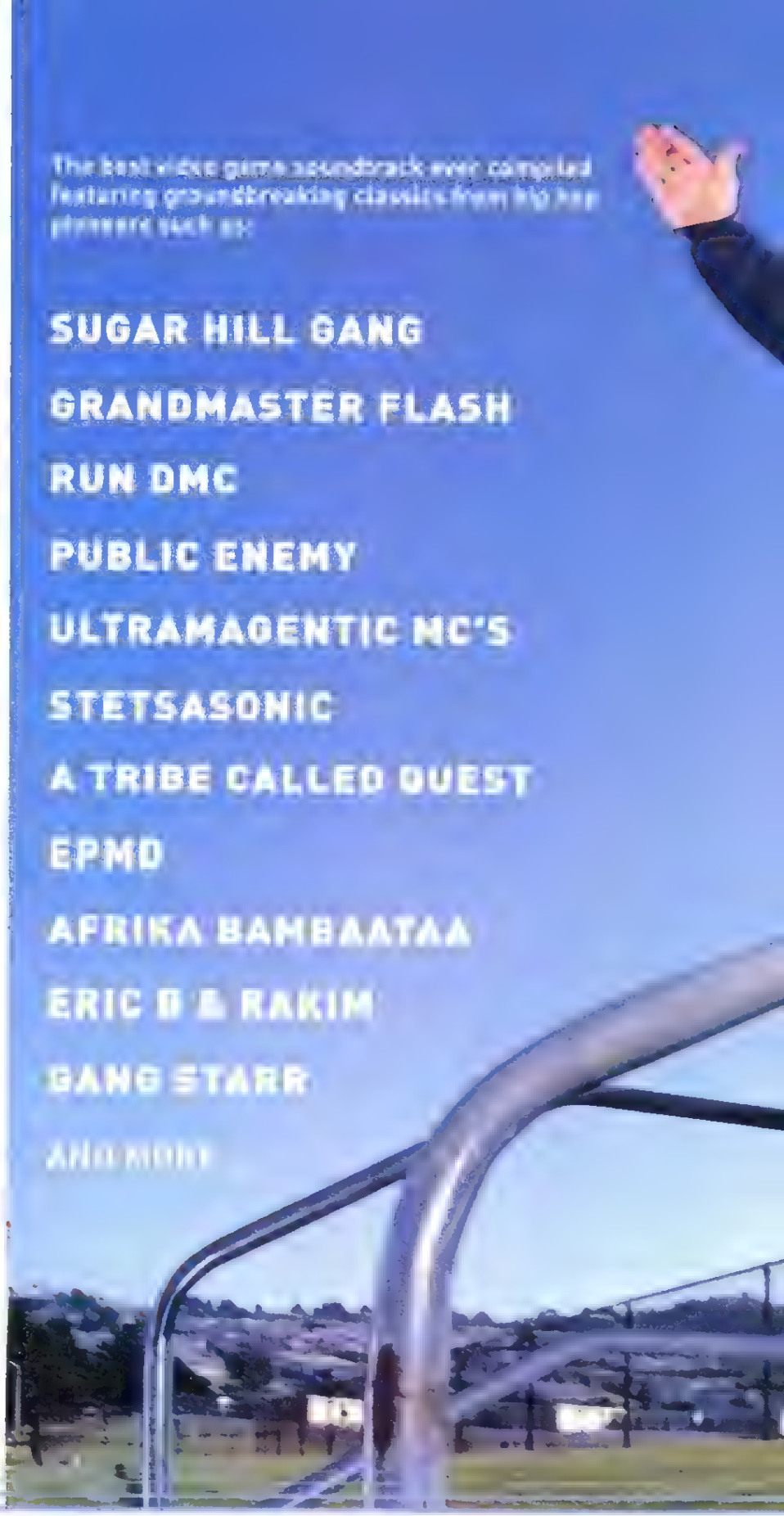
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PlayStation®2

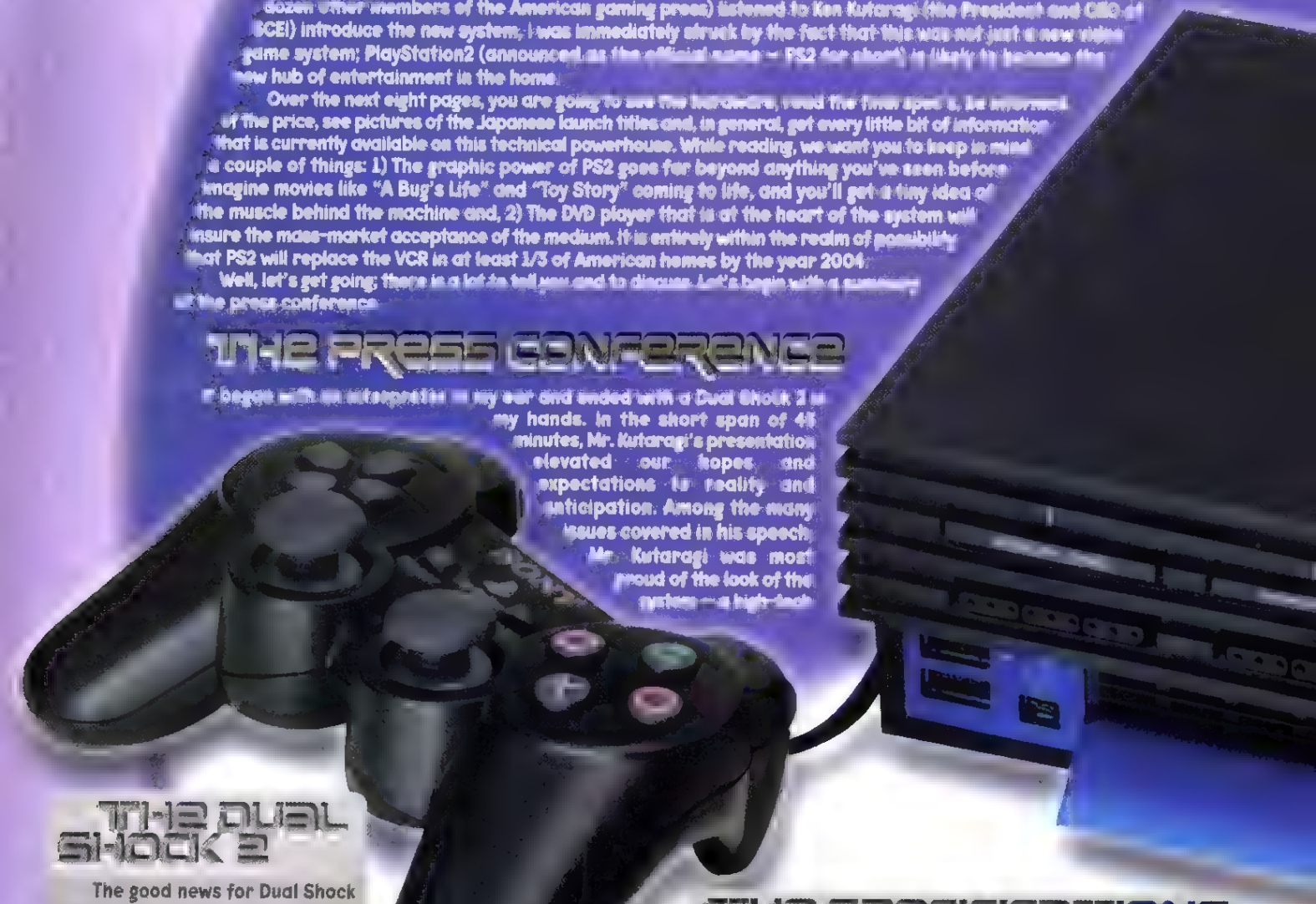
On Monday, September 13, 1999, Sony Computer Entertainment [illegible] the premier of the most anticipated new technology in the gaming world, PlayStation2. As Greg and I (and about a dozen other members of the American gaming press) listened to Ken Kutaragi (the President and CEO of SCEI) introduce the new system, I was immediately struck by the fact that this was not just a new video game system; PlayStation2 (announced as the official name – PS2 for short) is likely to become the new hub of entertainment in the home.

Over the next eight pages, you are going to see the hardware, read the final specs, be informed of the price, see pictures of the Japanese launch titles and, in general, get every little bit of information that is currently available on this technical powerhouse. While reading, we want you to keep in mind a couple of things: 1) The graphic power of PS2 goes far beyond anything you've seen before. Imagine movies like "A Bug's Life" and "Toy Story" coming to life, and you'll get a tiny idea of the muscle behind the machine and, 2) The DVD player that is at the heart of the system will insure the mass-market acceptance of the medium. It is entirely within the realm of possibility that PS2 will replace the VCR in at least 1/3 of American homes by the year 2004.

Well, let's get going; there is a lot to tell you and to discuss. Let's begin with a summary of the press conference.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE

It began with an interpreter in my ear and ended with a Dual Shock 2 in my hands. In the short span of 45 minutes, Mr. Kutaragi's presentation elevated our hopes and expectations to reality and anticipation. Among the many issues covered in his speech, Mr. Kutaragi was most proud of the look of the system – a high-tech



THE DUAL SHOCK 2

The good news for Dual Shock fans is that Sony will not be replacing the controller, which is arguably the best video game controller ever made. Instead, they will be enhancing it by allowing for analog movement on ALL of the controller's buttons and d-pad (with the exception of the 'Start' and 'Select' buttons). It doesn't take much of an imagination to think about the impact that this could have on games, particularly sports and racing games. The ability to vary speed and direction of a pitched ball in baseball, for example, would be unmatched by any other controller.

THE SPECIFICATIONS

CPU: 128 bit "Emotion Engine™"
SYSTEM CLOCK FREQUENCY: 294.912 MHz
MAIN MEMORY: Direct RDRAM
MEMORY SIZE: 32 MB

GRAPHICS: "Graphics Synthesizer"
CLOCK FREQUENCY: 147.456 MHz
EMBEDDED CACHE VRAM: 4 MB

IOP: I/O Processor
CPU CORE: PlayStation CPU+
CLOCK FREQUENCY: 33.8688 MHz or 36.864 MHz (selectable)
IOP MEMORY: 2 MB

SOUND: SPU2
NUMBER OF VOICES: 48ch plus software
SOUND MEMORY: 2 MB

DIMENSIONS: 12" (W) x 7" (D) x 3" (H) (flat)
WEIGHT: 4 lbs 10 oz.

combination of black and blue in a system that allows you to position it both vertically and horizontally, and its awesome technical specifications. He also gave us a price and a date; March 3, 2000 will be the release date (in Japan), at a price of 39,800 Yen (approximately $370). While there was no official confirmation of a US release date (other than to say "Fall") or price, you can bet money that it will hit American shores on 9/9/2000 at $299 (call it an educated guess).

After presenting the hardware, Mr. Kutaragi showed a list of developers and a series of slides and videos depicting some of the games that will be available at or near the system's launch. Some of the stuff was nothing more than concept art, while other titles (like Gran Turismo 2000 and Dark Cloud) seem more developed. But, it looked like we weren't going to get our hands on any of it, until Kutaragi-san ended his presentation and the curtains were drawn on both sides of the hotel ballroom to reveal a number of development kits and systems, all running the games that were furthest along. We were quickly given tastes of Sony's GT 2000 and Dark Cloud, Namco's Tekken Tag Tournament, Square Soft's The Bouncer, From Software's Eternal Ring, Capcom's Street Fighter Ex3, Koei's Kessen, Tecmo's Unison and Art Dink's A-Train 6. While some games were playable, others would only allow you to manipulate the camera in real-time. The easiest way to summarize the graphic quality of the titles is to ask you to think of the best CG intro's that you've ever seen (think Final Fantasy VII/VIII or any of the Tekken or Ridge Racer games) and imagine controlling characters that are drawn in that level of detail at 60 frames per second – within environments that are that detailed and alive. It is hard to believe that technology has come this far, in such a short period of time (five years since the debut of the original PlayStation). After about 20 minutes with the games, we were ushered out of the ballroom. Additional playing time would have to wait until Friday, when we were able to play a little bit more at Sony's impressive PS2 booth and to see a few things that weren't at the press conference (namely Namco's next generation Ridge Racer game).

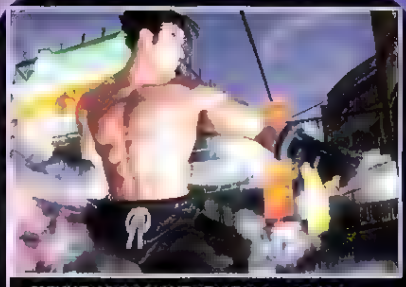
Well, that was the press conference, now we'll take a look at the final spec's on the machine. PS2 is scheduled to begin production in October and SCEI went on record at the press conference as to the number of units that would be shipping to Japanese retailers on March 4th and 5th – 1 million units! The PS2 launch is possibly shaping up to be, by a wide margin, the biggest launch in the history of video games.



DISC DEVICE: CD-ROM AND DVD-ROM
DEVICE SPEED: CD-ROM: 24X
DVD-ROM: 4X

ACCESSORIES INCLUDED

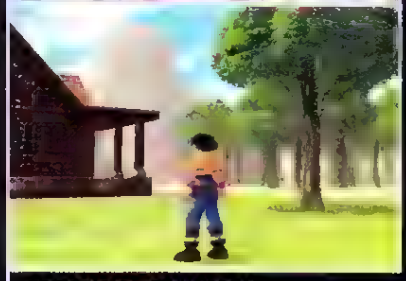
DUAL SHOCK 2 ANALOG CONTROLLER
HIGH CAPACITY 8MB MEMORY CARD
PLAYSTATION2 DEMO DISC
AV MULTI CABLE
AC POWER CORD



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT – NAMCO



THE BOUNCER – SQUARE EA



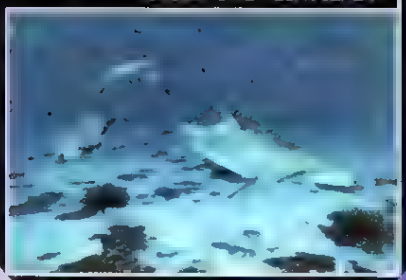
DARK CLOUD – SONY JAPAN



KESSEN – KOEI



GRAN TURISMO 2000 – SONY JAPAN



SPLASH DIVE – SONY JAPAN

THE SPECIFICATIONS

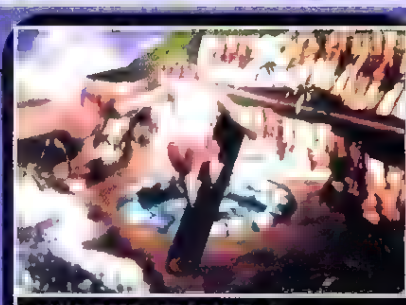
In addition to being the fastest video game system on the planet, the PS2 is also backward compatible with the original PlayStation. For space conscious moms and dads, this means that all you will have to do is replace the box. The games that you purchased for PlayStation will continue to work with PlayStation 2. While perusing the specs, you might also want to make note of the fact that the DVD-ROM supports DTS sound – a feature found on only the most expensive DVD players ($700+). For $370, Japanese gamers are not only going to get the most technically advanced video game system, but a full-featured DVD player as well! One unclear area, however, is the interface for playing DVD movies. Obviously, unless a remote control is to be included with the system (which we doubt), the Dual Shock 2 will have to handle these responsibilities. This could prove to be cumbersome as a result of the cable that connects the controller to the system. We should also explain a little bit about the memory cards. They will operate in the same fashion as PS memory cards, only they can contain up to 8 MB of data and will transfer data at speeds up to 250 times faster than original PS memory cards. There are two controller and memory card ports, as with the original PlayStation.

THE DEVELOPERS, PUBLISHERS AND SOFTWARE

The list of software publishers and developers in Japan, Europe and America is long and impressive. First, we'll give you a current list of all known developers and publishers that have completed third party agreements with Sony, along with anticipated titles from these publishers. In addition, we will take a closer look at the games that were playable at the press conference and Tokyo Game Show. Obviously, there are a number of games on this list that will never see the light of day in America (the rash of Mahjong games being among them) and since no North American release date has been set for the system, no American third party game announcements have been made. In fact, there were only but a handful of American publishers/developers at the Japanese launch. You can expect to hear from SCEA with regard to the situation in the US in the near future.

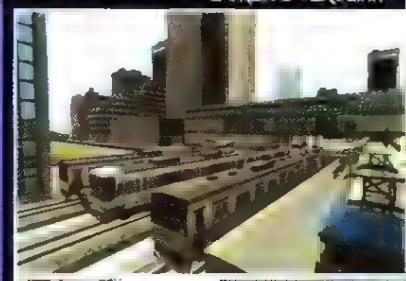
JAPAN

PUBLISHER / DEVELOPER	TITLE
ARTDINK CORPORATION	A-Train 6
ASCII CORPORATION	Tower, Sun and Rain
	Panic Surfing
ASK CO., LTD.	Billiards Master 2
ASMIK ACE ENTERTAINMENT, INC.	Sidewinder Max
ASTROLL CO., LTD.	American Arcade
ATHENA CO., LTD.	Pro Mahjong
BANDAI CO., LTD.	Mobile Suit Gundam
CAPCOM CO., LTD.	Oni Musha
	Street Fighter Ex3
DAZZ CO., LTD.	Lakemasters Ex
ECESCO DEVELOPMENT CO., LTD.	Battle on the Ghat
ELECTRONIC ARTS/SQUARE	XFire
ENIX CORPORATION	BBD 2000
	Last a Move 3



SKY SURFER – IDEA FACTORY

A TRAIN 6 – ARTDINK



POPOLOCROIS II – SONY JAPAN



KING BNDI – SONY JAPAN



WILD WILD RACING – IMAGINEER CO.



AMERICAN ARCADE – ASTROLL CO.

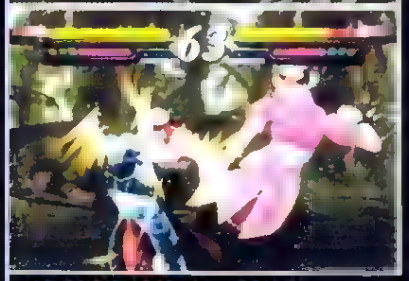




— SILLIENCE MEISTER 2 — SEK CO.

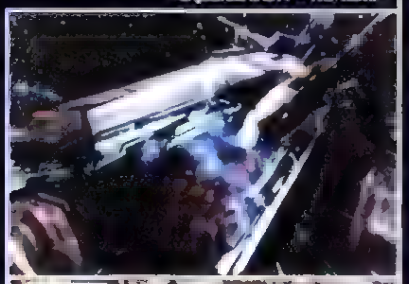
ONI MUSHA — CAPCOM





— STREET FIGHTER EX3 — CAPCOM

GRADIUS III & IV — KONAMI



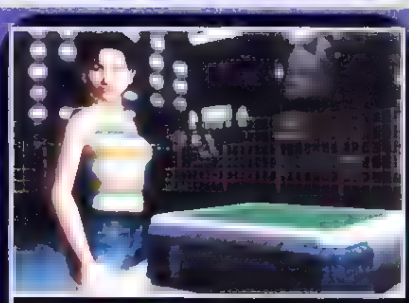


— JIKKYOU WORLD SOCCER 2000 — KONAMI

1 ON 1 GOVERNMENT — JORUDAN CO.



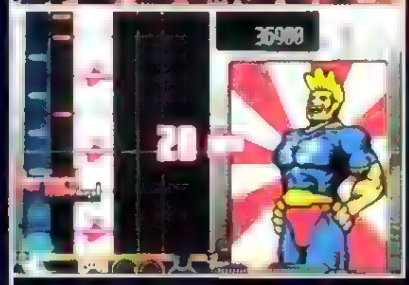
	Erotica
	Fighting GT's
	Sonnette
	Star Ocean 3
FROM SOFTWARE, INC.	Armored Core 2
	Eternal Ring
FUJITEC, INC.	Bakuryu 2
GENKI CO., LTD.	Jade Cocoon 2
GUST CO., LTD.	Fly High
HUDSON SOFT CO., LTD.	Bloody Roar 3
	Bomberman 2001
I4 CORPORATION	AI Igo 2001
	AI Mahjong 2001
	AI Shogi 20001
IDEA FACTORY CO., LTD.	Sky Surfer
IMAGINEER CO., LTD.	Wild Wild Racing
JORUDAN CO., LTD.	1 on 1 Government
KAGA TECH CO., LTD.	Tetsuman Menkyokaiden
KOEI CO., LTD.	Kessen
	Mahjong Taikai III
	Shin-Sangokumusou
	Soldnerschild 2
KONAMI CO., LTD.	Drum Mania
	Gradius III & IV
	Jikkyou Pawafuru Puroyakyu 7
	Jikkyou World Soccer 2000
	Mahjong Yarouze
LOCUS CO.	FX Pilot
M2TO INC	Tuning Car Race Game
MAGICAL CO., LTD.	Catch Bass Club
	Koshien 2000
	ProGolfer
MAINICHI COMMUNICATIONS, INC.	Todai Shogi Shikenbisha Dojyo
NAMCO LTD.	500GP
	New Ridge Racer
	Tekken Tag Tournament
RIVERHILLSOFT, INC.	World Neverland 3
SETA CORPORATION	Ide Yohsuke No Majan Kazoku 2
	Perfect Golf 3
SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, INC.	Dark Cloud
	Boku to Maoh (The King and I)
	Den-Sen
	Fantavision
	GT 2000
	IQ Remix
	Popolocrois III
	Splash Dive
SONY MUSIC (JAPAN)	L'Arc-en-ciel
	Tenchu 2
SPIKE CO., LTD.	WRC
SQUARE CO., LTD.	The Bouncer
SUN CORPORATION	Shanghai 5
	Street Mahjong Trance Majin 2
SUNRISE INTERACTIVE, INC.	Panzer Century G Breaker
T&E SOFT, INC.	3D Golf
TAITO CORPORATION	Go By Train!
TAKARA CO., LTD.	Choro Q HG
TECMO, LTD.	Ninja Gaiden
	Unison
TITUS JAPAN	Roadsters Trophy 2000
	Robocop
TOMY CO., LTD.	Baki the Grappler
UEP SYSTEMS, INC.	New Cool Boarders
VICTOR INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE, INC.	Let's Become a Pilot!
VIDEO SYSTEM CO., LTD.	F-1



— BAKURYU 2 — SUNSOFT

FANTAVISION — SONY JAPAN

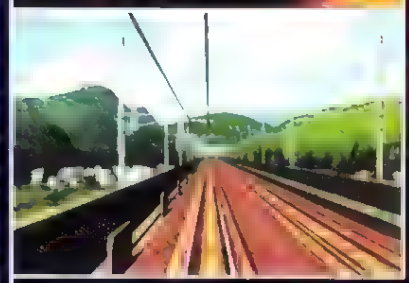




— DRUM MANIA — KONAMI

ROADSTERS TROPHY 2000 — TITUS





— GO BY TRAIN! — TAITO

CHORO Q HG — TAKARA





—LAKE MASTERS EX — DEZZ CO.

UNISON — TECMO

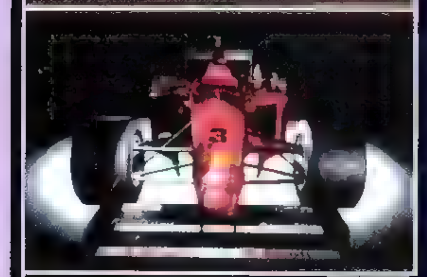




—BIKI THE GRAPPLER — TOMY

NEW RIDGE RACER — NAMCO





F1 — VIDEO SYSTEMS CO.

PRO GOLFER — MEDICAL COMPANY



VR-1 JAPAN, INC. ..... 3D Real Drive
WARASHI, INC. ..... Soul Surfing
VING, INC. ..... Fighting Illusion
K-1 Grandprix
[illegible] ENTERPRISE, INC. ..... [illegible]

NORTH AMERICAN PUBLISHERS

[illegible] STUDIOS
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ATLUS U.S.A., INC.
BUNGIE SOFTWARE
CAPCOM ENTERTAINMENT
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CRAVE ENTERTAINMENT
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Ubi Soft Entertainment SA
Virgin Interactive Entertainment Europe Ltd.

THE OPINIONS

To wrap things up, we'll take a look at the software we were able to see and that will, more than likely, ship in America with the system's launch. Both Greg and I will give you our opinions on the hardware itself and on these key games.

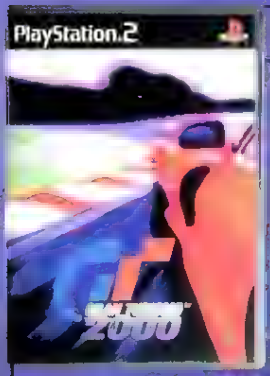
THE HARDWARE

DAVE: I can't say that I was surprised by the quality of the system, or its outrageous technical strength, but to actually see it running and PLAY it was far more than I expected. PS2 delivers on every promise, and then some. Of course, the beautiful box design is the icing on the cake, with its blue "footies" and blue discs, it's just too sweet. Heck, I would buy it just to have the coolest looking DVD player around (not to mention cheap, $370 for DTS DVD?!). The Dual Shock 2 feels great in your hands (as you would expect) and the processing power at work is simply so far beyond what you are currently experiencing (and that includes Dreamcast and Voodoo3/TNT2) that it is pointless to make any comparisons. That being said, they need to do something about the dev. kits (the $18,000 machines look like a bigger version of PS2); Displaying your pride and joy at your desk, with the word "Tool" emblazoned across the side of it, is not the best way to impress women at the office.



GREG: The hardware specs speak for themselves – the PlayStation 2 is a beast! I personally think it's going to take quite a while for developers to come to grips with the technology, hence the first set of games coming out of Japan being dressed-up sequels and the like. The fact that not only can you play your whole library of standard PS games, but DVD movies

as well, makes this a machine that everyone will want — no, HAVE to own. I've got to hand it to Ken Kutaragi and the engineers at Sony; they definitely seem to have a grand plan. In terms of the box design, I think it's awesome! The fact that you can position it both horizontally, as an additional component to your audio/video system, and vertically for your desktop is ingenious. Add to that faster memory cards with larger storage capabilities and not messing with the near-perfect Dual Shock controller (except making the buttons analog), and you've got possibly the best home console ever produced.



The Games

Gran Turismo 2000



DAVE: As good as the car models looked at E3, they are even more polished now. I just wish that I could get reflections like this, in real life! There are times when you will be convinced that this game is photo-real. The latest version offered a daytime course, with the coolest sun/lens flare trick that you've yet to see. This game will single-handedly sell those first million units that SCEI is shipping.

GREG: While I'm sure the end result will be nothing short of breathtaking, it's obvious Polyphony (the developers) still have a ways to go, in order to get the game ready for launch in March. Some of my minor complaints revolve around the fact that the cars are almost too shiny; you can't see through the windows and inside the car, and the environments aren't reflected off of their surfaces — all things you should be able to pull off with the kind of processing power the PS2 and its Emotion Engine offers.

The Bouncer

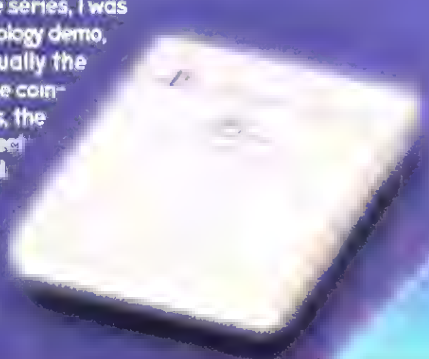
DAVE: Although it wasn't playable at the press conference and TGS, this is the game that the marketing folks should rally around in North America. It is a new franchise, is in the action/adventure genre and features some very unique, great-looking characters. It should be more accessible than FFVIII and the game, in real-time, looks as good, if not better, than the CG scenes that Square has produced in the past. Treated as a AAA title, it will have hardware flying off of the shelves in the US. This is the one that blew press conference attendees away.

GREG: Out of the handful of games shown, this rolling demo impressed me the most. While I'm not quite sure how the gameplay will be handled, the mixture of cinematics and fighting could create a new genre. Square seems to be one of the few companies who are truly interested in conveying and evoking human emotions out of their characters and franchises, and The Bouncer goes a long way in showcasing this company's amazing talent pool. Just wait until you see some of the special effects, they put some of the big-budget movies to shame.

Tekken Tag Tournament

DAVE: If you've seen the arcade game, then you know absolutely nothing about TTT. This game is superior in every way and it begins with the graphics. The character animation and backgrounds take gaming to a new level. It makes VF3 on the Dreamcast look old and dated.

GREG: Being a big fan of the series, I was glad to see that the Tekken technology demo, shown back in March, was actually the beginnings of this game. While the coin-op version is currently in arcades, the PS2 version is quite different. Expect CG-quality character models and photo-realistic environments paired with Namco's award-winning gameplay. The only downside, at this point, is that the character animation seems a bit stiff.







KOEIKEN 2000 – MEGICAL CO.

CATCH KISS CLUB 2 – MEGICAL CO.





ETHARNEL RING – FROM SOFTWARE

ARMORED CORE 2 – FROM SOFTWARE





IQ REMIX – SONY JAPAN

DEN SEN – SONY JAPAN



ANEW RIDGE RACER

DAVE: This one was only running on video, but it looked great. It was a little similar to GT 2000. The video showed a quick history of the Ridge Racer games on the PlayStation, followed by the introduction of "New Ridge Racer" (obviously a working title). Prior to the new game's video debut, Namco showed CG footage from the intro's to Ridge Racer and R4. Those CG intro's had nothing on the look of New Ridge Racer "running in real-time, awesome."

GREG: I wasn't too surprised to see the announcement of a new Ridge Racer in the works, but I was surprised to see that the game appeared to be pretty far in its development cycle, while looking like a serious next-generation sequel, there was only one track on display – the traditional urban track that's been in just about every Ridge Racer iteration. Let's hope Namco makes the final cut offers up a lot of variety.

ETERNAL RING

DAVE: This one caught me by surprise. Although it was barely playable, you could walk around a painstakingly detailed castle that looked photo-real. From the developers of the King's Field series, this first-person role-playing game could do very well as a launch title in the US. Eternal Ring was a very strong advertisement for the power of PS2.

GREG: Wow! Eternal Ring also caught me by surprise. Definitely looking like a next-generation King's Field, Eternal Ring conveyed an amazing fantasy atmosphere, with attacking knights in armor, ancient passageways filled with glimmering pools of water and a huge, scaly, fire-breathing dragon. This game shows incredible promise.

DARK CLOUD

DAVE: this game is something of a mystery in that, at first, I thought it looked like a Zelda-type adventure. But, you are able to build your own cities, so it could be a world-building game. While we don't know for sure, I came away with the impression that it just might be a build-your-own RPG. In addition to the potential of that concept, the environments, particularly the water effects, were beautiful. It looks like a perfect fit for the Japanese market and a potential winner in the US as well.

GREG: Whether or not Dark Cloud plays like Actraiser or allows you to make your own RPGs, the game has some serious visuals. The opening cinema (using in-game graphics) showed the hero flying on a magic carpet through a canyon filled with the most realistic-looking water I've ever seen (apart from the real stuff, that is). It's quite clear that the developers are paying close attention to character interaction and atmosphere. Let's hope that this title makes it to the States next year.

STREET FIGHTER EX 3

DAVE: While I've never been a big SF fan, I know what looks good and SF fans are going to be blown away by the new look of their favorite game. This game looks like the CG movie that could have been. Considering that Street Fighter The Movie was the last SF/PlayStation launch title, things have dramatically improved!

GREG: The series just keeps on going and Street Fighter EX3 on the PS2 could be the perfect culmination (which is unlikely, as Capcom will probably milk this franchise for as long as they are in business). While there is no official information, it looks like every fighter from the SF universe (as well as Capcom's other fighting games) will be playable, and the 3D visuals, while true to their 2D counterparts, look incredibly detailed. Like Tekken Tag Tournament, SF EX3 lets you call on an ally in the heat of battle.

Well, that is all of the information we have for now. We hope you have enjoyed our brief tour of all that is PlayStation2. As you might expect, we will be feeding you every kernel of information, as it comes our way over the next few months, leading up to the Japanese launch — followed in short order by the American debut at next year's E3. Just take a deep breath and be patient, the future of home entertainment is just around the corner!

TIME TO UPGRADE YOUR STEREO: PLAYSTATION 2 AND DIGITAL SOUND

As a serious home theater enthusiast – well, as serious as one can be on a video game editor's budget – one of the most exciting aspects of the PlayStation 2's incredible hardware specs, for me, is the advent of digital sound. Those two little logos that you can barely see on the top of the box, one for Dolby and one for DTS, are going to present a whole new realm of possibilities for game developers. There's only one problem: to take advantage of digital capabilities, you're probably going to have to go out and buy a new receiver.

Next time you're in a movie theater to see some big Hollywood blockbuster (which will most likely suck), listen carefully to the sound. You're not just getting a big blast of stereo sound (right and left), you're truly surrounded by the music, special effects and dialog. You've got dialog coming from the center channel speakers, usually located right behind the movie screen, so that it seems like the voice is coming right out of the actor's mouth. Special effects pound out of the front and rear speakers, sending bullets whizzing behind you or jets flying over your head. Bass and low frequency effects (LFE) are handled by huge subwoofers. Sony intends to bring this same type of experience to gamers through the usage of the PlayStation 2's two digital sound formats.

You may be familiar with Dolby Pro Logic (or the cheaper Dolby Surround), which comes standard in just about every receiver made in the past couple of years. Dolby Pro Logic was the first step to bringing the theater experience into the home, by outputting sound to rear and center channel speakers. The Dolby Pro Logic decoder inside the receiver takes the audio information from your TV, VCR, laser disc or DVD player and breaks it into right, left, rear and center channels. By altering the phase of the audio waveform between left and right, the surround track is hooked on to a normal stereo soundtrack. If a sound wave is perfectly out-of-phase it belongs on the rear channel and if it is perfectly in-phase then it belongs on the front channels. Depending on the degree of the phase shift, these out-of-phase waves are reproduced partly via the rear speakers and partly via the front speakers.

The big drawback to Pro Logic decoding is that the rear speaker information is basically a mono signal. Instead of individual channel information (left and right), Dolby Pro Logic uses a matrix sound, taking elements of the audio information and sending it to both rear speakers. Even the Pro Logic center channel information isn't a discrete signal. Pro Logic doesn't even take a subwoofer into account, depending on the receiver to pass bass signals on its own. This is acceptable when watching TV (many shows are broadcast in Dolby Surround, from Buffy to The X-Files); but, when you're a hard core "want it all" kind of guy, you want true rear, center and LFE channels.

Those of us who have been DVD and Laser Disc owners, for the past two years, can attest to the glory of both Dolby Digital and DTS sound. Dolby Digital is, of course, the newest upgrade from Dolby Labs, the people who have virtually defined the sound of home theater over the past decade. DTS (Digital Theater Sound), on the other hand, is a relative newcomer to the sound realm, having debuted in 1993 with Jurassic Park (Spielberg has an interest in DTS).

Both DTS and Dolby Digital work in a similar manner, even though they are competing formats (in fact, most people, including myself, cannot really tell the difference between Dolby Digital and DTS). The digital sound stream needs to be directed through a decoder, which takes the bits and separates them into six discrete audio channels (sometimes referred to as 5.1), as opposed to Pro Logic's four. With DTS and Dolby Digital, you have separate mixes for front left and right, rear left and right, center and a limited signal for the subwoofer (the .1 channel).

Both sound formats are not only greater audio quality than compact disc, but also provide a level of positional audio. Because the audio streams are all digital (and have usually been digitally produced or enhanced), you lose the analog hissing sound you normally hear in your speakers (especially the rear ones) that Pro Logic produces. Also, because the subwoofer has a dedicated line sent to it, the LFE sounds are much more pronounced and dramatic, and your sub really bashes away on the floor. Just about every DVD has some form of Dolby Digital sound encoding (whether it's two, four or all six channels depends on the age and production value of the movie), while there are a small but growing number of DTS discs available.

If you've bought a nice receiver geared towards home theater use in the past year, chances are you may have Dolby Digital capabilities. While DD receivers have become more common, there are still plenty of systems out there that do not have DD decoders, and even fewer receivers that have both DD and DTS decoding capabilities. There are some really great high-end receivers that handle both audio, such as the Yamaha DSP-A1 ($2699), which I highly recommend. There are also more affordable receivers like Sony's SR-DA333ES ($800), Denon's entire AVR line and similar budget-minded products.

Make sure you double and triple check with the store before you walk out the door with your new receiver; some components are labeled as "Dolby Digital Ready," which means they can take 5.1 inputs from an outboard source (such as a DVD player or separate decoder), but do not have the capabilities built in. Also, the digital sound capabilities of the PlayStation 2 will be delivered via an optical digital output, which requires an optical cable, which will set you back about forty bucks at your local audio/video store.

There's a lot of sound going on in big action movies and it's very exciting to imagine this sort of presentation in a big action game. In a game like Grand Turismo 2000, for instance, you might be able to hear cars coming up behind you and know which side they were trying to pass you on, while your engine throbs through your subwoofer, shaking the floor and making your downstairs neighbors crazy. Of course, sound and music tends to be ignored in those last minute in most games, so we'll have to hope that developers are going to step up to the plate and offer digital sound effects and music within their games. Even if they don't, however, your DVD movies should sound better than ever through the PlayStation 2.

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GAME ARTS


GRANDIA

published by: SCEA
developed by: Insomniac
percent complete: 90%
release: November 2nd

Spyro: Ripto's Rage!™



























We have spent the latter part of a week going through the alpha version of Spyro 3: Ripto's Rage and we feel safe in telling all of you Spyro fans out there that you are in for a real treat. We have played [illegible] of the game's [illegible] and the [illegible] authority, challenge, puzzles and secrets than the original game. This time around, the design team at Insomniac Games, with the able assistance of Universal Interactive, have stepped to [illegible] and puzzle aspects of Spyro, with less attention paid to the [illegible] that characterised the first game, while we miss some of the trickier jumps, we are more than pleased with the overall depth and feel in Spyro 3.

Your task in the new game is an [illegible] as [illegible] to progress further into the game and to open up certain portals within the [illegible], you need collect these items. Talismans are given for completing the primary task in a level, assigned by the most NPC you meet up in level. Orbs are rewarded for completing secondary tasks and the many gems that are found within each of the game's [illegible]. In the first two worlds (Summer Forest and Autumn Plains), it's all about the Talismans. In the third world, Winter Tundra, you won't be able to [illegible] get to the Fourth (Secret) world unless you've collected enough orbs. In addition, in order to [illegible] secret means that Spyro will need to [illegible] of each levels, so that it's easy enough game to say a curious bit. Moneybags is back this time, [illegible] shooting and swimming and are absolutely essential to Spyro's quest for orbs.

So get the low-down, the good reasons that you must [illegible] and forth through the many levels and [illegible] you to achieve success and success. Well, there's [illegible] we can tell you for now. We will give you the full story on the game when we review it as part of our cover story in our December issue. Spyro 3 is scheduled for release on November 2nd.

DAVE





Excessive Speeding 2:54 a.m.

Jet Moto racing is back. With an all-new 3D racing engine that delivers sharper graphics, faster speed and more adrenaline. Jostle and fight for position on 19 killer tracks and 11 insanely fast hover bikes. It's the wicked speed you've always wanted, without all the tickets. | ***The rush is back!***

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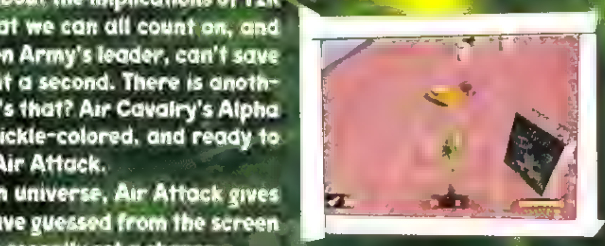
published by: 3DO
developed by: 3DO
percent complete: 90%
release: November

ARMY MEN™ AIR ATTACK™



With everyone and their mother concerned about the implications of Y2K and its disastrous effects, there is one thing that we can all count on, and that's Army Men games from 3DO. If Sarge, Green Army's leader, can't save us from 0-0-00, then I don't know who can. Wait a second. There is another hero emerging from Green Army's camp. Who's that? Air Cavalry's Alpha Wolf Battalion leader, Captain. He's big, buff, pickle-colored, and ready to bring down the Tan Menace, in 3DO's upcoming Air Attack.

Taking the next logical step in the Army Men universe, Air Attack gives players a top-down perspective (as you might have guessed from the screen shots we've shown you, previously, in the mag). We recently got a chance to see more of the game and it is looking beautiful. The lighting effects are insane. With bottle rockets, missiles, roman candles, and lasers all providing their own rich special effects, the game boasts fast frame rate and hi-res graphics. The explosions are all eye candy, while the variety of terrains will keep the game from going stale. We got a chance to see night missions, winter wonderlands, water levels, and your typical backyard environments.





As with the previous Army Men game, Air Attack switches players between 'our' world and 'their' world. Of course, 'our' world is cooler, with everyday stuff we all know and love becoming all-of-a-sudden a cause for alarm. Ants, donuts, bees, honey packets and stones are now all instruments of death. It is up to Captain to use these to his advantage. In doing so, the game picks up a little more of a strategic element. We have been told that players can succeed by simply blasting their way through the levels, but that isn't nearly as much fun as using everyday garbage to destroy the Tan minions.





All told, there will be four helicopters available: the Huey, Chinook, Super Stallion and Apache. All of them feature the ever-essential winch for air-lifting the aforementioned litter-of-doom and picking up power-ups. There will be plenty of special weapons. The designers have taken extra special care in making certain that there will be enough bottle rockets to keep the young'ns entertained for hours.





Each of the choppers have their own specific strengths/weaknesses, as do the co-pilots you will have to select. And if an AI co-pilot isn't good enough for you, 3DO has made this a multi-player's dream. Not only will there be head-to-head and flag modes, but in the spirit of Contra, all 18 missions can be played in co-op mode. Players even draw from the same life-pool, so there is an added incentive for trying to cooperate.



One of the unique things about Air Attack will be its use of non-plastic third parties. The bees will attack anything that travels in their flowery air-space, ants (using real ant AI) go after anything, while other insects will only attack if provoked. If you hate bugs, then you will probably want to grab the fly-swatter before sitting down with this one. Additionally, the sound effects are in now and they will be sure to draw some chuckles. Our favorite so far, the mutant bugs! You'll see what we mean.

From what we've seen, Air Attack could be the best Army Men yet; it's definitely shaping up to be a lot of fun. We know you'll have trouble sleeping as you wait for our incredibly in-depth review next issue, but please just try to relax.

DILLON



NFL GameDay 2000 gives you 1,200 new plays and 200 new motion captured moves designed and performed by 45 NFL players. There's a Training Camp Mode to practice plays, and a GM Mode to manage your team over multiple seasons. We've even added a revolutionary telestrator along with Dick Enberg and Phil Simms commentary. Now everyday is game day.

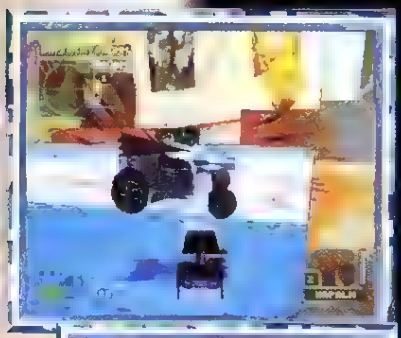
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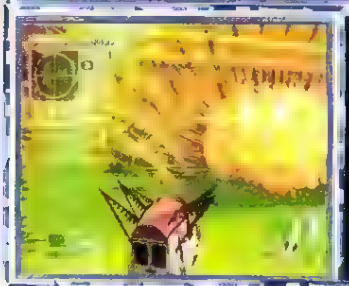
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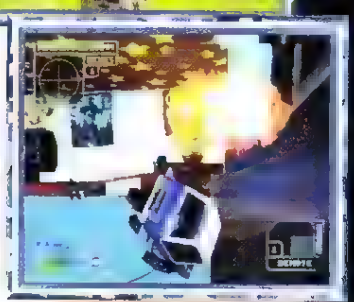
Twisted Metal 4











published by: 989 Studios
developed by: 989 Studios
percent complete: 75%
release: December 99

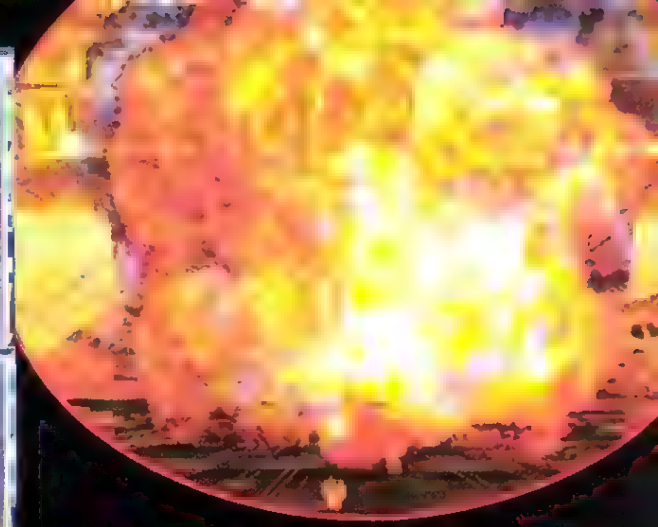
For just about every year of the PlayStation's existence, we have been given a new Twisted Metal game. Most of us old-school PSX owners can remember a time when this Twisted franchise was da bomb. Now, we are about to embark on the 4th incarnation of the series.

Like any good used car salesman, 989's got the goods to hawk, and is looking for buyers. Popular consensus on 989's Twisted Metal 3 was lackluster at best, having been out-classed by other vehicular combat simulations. This was acceptable, being that it was 989's first endeavor for developing the game (as 1 and 2 were produced at SingleTrac). In their second go at it, they have an established engine and are concentrating on bringing the people what they want; New cars, cool characters, bigger battlegrounds, crazy storyline, and more mayhem!

This year's storyline brings Sweet Tooth to the forefront. Having taken down Calypso in last year's tourney, he is all about running the show and making clowns out of anyone who questions his freakshow. Now, someone (we can't say who) is out for revenge.

Thus far, it's looking like a killer product with features comparable to the other models available. This year's most anticipated add-ons include eight newly-designed levels, taking advantage of the virtual world in which they were created. Not only that, but each stage will boast its own exclusive secret super weapon. You will be able to unleash destruction as you steer your way through multi-level mazes that stretch across horizontal as well as vertical landscapes, take a ride around Sweet Tooth's bedroom, and the ultimate in auto-carnage environments (and the site of the final showdown), a full-fledged carnival. Let's not forget the brand new multiplayer-only maps that will provide minimum clutter for maximum destruction. In addition, an attempt has been made to recapture the thrill of the first two





in the series with even more destructable and interactive environments.

The multi-player levels will accommodate up to four passengers (provided you have a multi-tap) and can include up to three other additional computer controlled cars. When you're alone, or with a loved one, you will be able to play through the tournament co-op style, either with a real, live companion, or with a CPU-controlled ally.

TM4 promises improved graphics and vehicle physics this time around also. And, why not? Every good successor needs to build on something. The combat-ready, armory-on-wheels vehicles will be able to spin, twist, jump, and sideswipe their way to the greatest show on earth.

Breaking the long-standing tradition of non-customizable vehicles, TM4 will allow you to design your ride from the ground up. They got 'em on the lot and they need to sell, sell, sell! You name the size (compact to luxury), style, paint job, and options package. We got ourselves a sucker, doh!, I mean buyer. Of course, their will be the power-ups that can be picked up on the levels, fresh and fast combos, the return of Rob Zombie and the aforementioned ability to lay waste to most everything.

As is our policy when looking at getting equipped with a new transport unit, we took an early version of TM4 for a quick test drive. Although still in an early state, with a few clipping and frame rate issues, this puppy should be ready to drive off the lot sometime this Fall.

greg



Nice to see cops eat something besides jelly doughnuts!



No, you're not paranoid, man. They are out to get you. Luckily, you've come prepared with a beast of a car and the guts to run it to the redline. Watch the gap grow between you and the cops dude, as the gap between your accelerator and the floorboard disappears.

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A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH GORDON BELLAMY

THRASHER presents

SKATE AND DESTROY

Skateboarding games are always a difficult thing to create because the sport's focus is on doing tricks and "showing off." There have been some notable successes such as the original 720, Skate or Die and Tony Hawk for the PlayStation, but there have also been plenty of failures – Street Skater anyone? Rockstar Games and developer Z-Axis have taken a different approach towards the skateboarding genre. Instead of producing another "arcade" skateboarding game, Z-Axis has been working with Thrasher magazine to produce Thrasher: Skate and Destroy. The resulting game is more of a skateboarding sim, and it holds a lot of promise. Although the game is due out on November 15, Gordon Bellamy, the creative director on Thrasher at Z-Axis, was kind enough to take a break from his busy schedule and tell us a little more about the game.



PSEx: Give us a little history. What has Z-Axis done in the past?

GORDON: Our first title for the PlayStation was Three Lions, the official World Cup soccer game for England. We also have Space Invaders coming this holiday season for the PlayStation. Thrasher will be our third game. As far as our history, we started off in 1995 originally doing the graphics for Madden 96 for the Sega Genesis, and have grown from a one man shop in a dorm room to a proud company of about 35 or so.

PSEx: What about yourself?

GORDON: I started at Electronic Arts right out of college. I helped with designing Madden 95 and Madden 96 and then I came over to Z-Axis in November of 1995.

PSEx: What is Thrasher? What sets it apart from other skateboarding games?

GORDON: Thrasher is an authentic street skateboarding game. We've focused on delivering the fantasy of growing to be a pro skateboarder and doing what it takes to accomplish that. We have real skate sites from around the world and all the moves and, most importantly, an addictive gameplay experience.

PSEx: Can you describe some of the basic gameplay for us? What are the goals in Thrasher? How do you complete a level? What makes up a level?

GORDON: The levels are real world environments and the challenge is to see them as a skater sees them – to see a wall as something you can wall ride; to see a ledge as something you can grind on. To complete a level you have to show proficiency by doing a certain number of diverse moves in a finite amount of time. There are also multiplayer modes where you go head to head with a friend, basically trying to top one another in different ways.

PSEx: How interactive are the environments?

GORDON: You can skate on anything. One of the great things about the game is that there is no single hardest move. The real challenge is to continue to see new ways of skating the areas.

PSEx: Now, you're saying that we are going to learn new ways to skate. Can you describe the game's progression scheme for us? How exactly does a player move up from beginner to advanced?

GORDON: You start off in your hometown with some basic skateboarding moves. After you succeed in your hometown, you get to turn pro and you begin to earn sponsors. You can customize your deck, customize your shirt and shoes, and learn new moves. You'll move through New York, San Francisco – through real sites like the Embarcadero, the Avenues, China Basin – to Los Angeles with Venice Beach, LA river and, finally, internationally. Once you've made it through all the levels and learned all the moves, then you have to go back and master the game and earn Thrasher skater covers, by getting the top scores in each of the cities. Once you've done that you can earn the skater of the year cover.

PSEx: So, the ultimate goal, then, is to become the cover boy for Thrasher magazine?

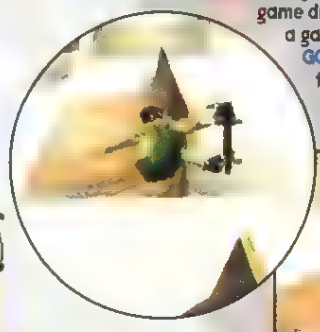
GORDON: Yes, it is. As it is for pro skaters.

PSEx: What kind of influence has Thrasher magazine had on the game itself?

GORDON: Thrasher has actively worked with us throughout the project. They've been an authenticator for Alan Blaine's design of the game. We met with them, time and time again, and they've helped us get the real skaters for the motion capture, as well as supplying photos and research on the real sites. They were very valuable and helped us ultimately make a better game for people to play.

PSEx: When you say "authentic skating," what makes an "authentic skating" game different from an "arcade skating" game? Should we expect a game like Top Skater or something completely different?

GORDON: It's an authentic skating game, in that you're rewarded for being a more creative skateboarder. That's what it's about, in its entirety. It's about seeing the world as a





skateboarder sees it, doing the real moves that skateboarders do, growing your own library of moves and discovering how good you can be.

PSEx: How creative can you get? Is there any limit to the number or order of tricks that you can string together?
GORDON: The different skaters have different characteristics, however the only limit is what you can think of.

PSEx: What kind of experience has the Z-Axis team had with skateboarding?
GORDON: *laughs* Well around the office we've developed some casual skateboarders. We went down to X-Games to talk to the pros and spend time with them. We have lots of people from the skate community in our offices and we've grown to love it.

PSEx: You said the single player game is driven by the quest to become the ultimate skateboarder and get the Thrasher cover. What drives the multiplayer game? What options are there?
GORDON: We wanted the multiplayer mode to be like real skateboarding, so we talked to Thrasher about "what do real skaters do." Basically we have a lot of turn-based games where I'll go and then you'll go. We wanted to keep the joystick active for both players and have it be like real skateboarding. It's not synchronized skateboarding, but basically games of one-up-manship. One of the most popular ones is a match called "sick fix" where you try to make the worst wreck.

PSEx: So, the point of that part of the game is to kill yourself?
GORDON: No, the point of the game is to injure yourself dramatically.

PSEx: What kind of impact does the sponsorship model have on the game? How does finding different sponsors affect gameplay?
GORDON: The fantasy of the game is to be a pro skater and part of the progression of being a pro skater is gaining sponsors and traveling around the world. We have real sponsors for decks, for shoes and for clothing that you get as you improve.

PSEx: What advantage does getting a sponsor give you versus going without a sponsor?
GORDON: That's a personal choice. Some people choose not to have sponsors. Some people just want to skate for themselves. In fact, we have a very large free skate mode where you can just skate to your heart's content. However, some people do like the sponsors.

PSEx: What kind of control options are there? How have you ensured "a real skating experience" on a controller with two stubby little joysticks and eight buttons?
GORDON: Well, of course we have Dual Shock for falls and for grinding. We have analog control for the maximum control of your skateboard. We also have the ability to control your landings, if you choose, so that you can control every aspect. Even when you're flying through the air, after a crash, you can still tuck, bail and control your guy in the air.

PSEx: How does the health meter come into play?
GORDON: Well, the point of a level, of a street level, is to show a certain amount of proficiency and then get out of the level successfully. As you know, the cops chase you when the timer runs out, or you can break your board by crashing too many times. If you take too much damage and break your board, you'll be knocked out of the level.

PSEx: Can you upgrade your board at all? Can you get better trucks, better decks, etc.?
GORDON: You learn more moves and you upgrade your skills. YOU get better from playing the game. It's a lot like real skateboarding; the more you do it, the better you'll be at it.

PSEx: In terms of the game, Thrasher isn't the only skateboarding authority that you've consulted. How have you brought skaters "into the game" and what was it like working with them?
GORDON: It was tremendous. We built a motion capture studio in San Carlos and actually built up a skate apparatus — quite a challenging one — for pro skaters and we had a number of them in for our motion capture and also just to advise and consult on the game. There's nothing like real skaters to make the experience right for people.

PSEx: What kind of soundtrack can we expect for the game?
GORDON: Rockstar has put together a soundtrack of classic hip-hop. It has Run DMC, Grandmaster Flash, EPMD and lots of other great artists. It's pretty cool. I enjoy it. It brings back memories for me, personally, and I think it brings some great music to a new generation of game players.

PSEx: How would you say that Thrasher compares to that skating classic, Skate or Die?
GORDON: We have Skate or Die in our office (720). It's a great game and we built another great game. There's always room for more than one

PSEx: Do you see this as the spiritual successor to 720? Or something completely different?
GORDON: This is an original experience on the PlayStation. I think that's what people are looking for right now, especially this late in the cycle -- original game experiences. This is not like 720, it's not like any of the other skateboarding games out, even now. It's original and that's what people pay good money for. That's what they deserve.

PSEx: Do you fear that you may be limiting your market with a skating game? Why is this going to appeal to the average "gamer" versus a skating fan?
GORDON: People like, in games, to be presented with challenges which can be accomplished and they love fantasies. We have a compelling fantasy, to become a pro skateboarder, to have that experience and we have a gameplay mechanic which grows with the gamer.

PSEx: How is the game structured so someone can walk into it without getting frustrated? Is there a training mode?
GORDON: You start off in the basic hometown level. There are no steps, it's some basic ledges, some open spaces, some nice quarter and half pipes and a basic library of moves. Once you've shown your ability to master those moves, you learn more moves and your library grows. You don't, for example, start off with all 13 grinds, you start off with a basic grind. Once you've mastered the basic grind, you move on, like a skateboarder, and you learn them all.

PSEx: What kinds of things have you been doing around the office for inspiration? Watch any good skateboarding movies lately?
GORDON: Well, Skate and Destroy is actually a skateboarding movie itself, from Thrasher. Thrasher's brought us a whole library of films that we look at. We actually have skateboards in the office which provide us with our own highlights from the skating world — or at least some great crashes.

PSEx: Regarding the PlayStation2, have you guys considered the PlayStation2 as developers? Or is it still PlayStation, only, for you guys?
GORDON: The PlayStation2 is a very exciting platform. From what we've seen it's definitely something we're going to want to work on in the future.

PSEx: Have you started anything for the PlayStation2 yet?
GORDON: *laughing* You're done.

PSextreme would like to thank Jeff Castaneda for setting up this interview and Gordon for taking time out of his busy schedule to talk with us.




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Introducing Omega Boost. Why go to all the trouble of being weightless if you can't blow up a bunch of space crap?

OMEGA BOOST

While the engineers at NASA might have been shortsighted, ours were not. They've put together a gravity-defying, medulla-blowing shooting game with a full 360 degrees of free-range motion. Translation: Now you have the ability, and the sophisticated weaponry, to annihilate alien warships with frightening speed and accuracy. All of which beats the hell out of adjusting some wing nut on the MIR Space Station. **Omega Boost, from the creators of Gran Turismo.**







genre: Racing
published by: Universal Interactive / SCEA
developed by: Naughty Dog

origin: USA
of CDs: 1
available: Now

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

SCORE:

BOTTOM LINE

CTR has not only matched the standard of Mario Kart 64, but it has exceeded it. PlayStation owners can rejoice that we finally have a worthy cart racing title. The game looks great, runs fast, plays great and has no flaws — it therefore deserves our highest rating.

98%





Years from now, when we all look back with nostalgia upon the original PlayStation, there's no doubt that the Crash Bandicoot series will be considered one of the system's highlights. The Crash games showed what the console was capable of in the hands of talented designers. Although some criticized the game for its lack of a fully free-roaming environment, the beautiful graphics, tight control, and brilliant level design impressed the vast majority of gamers. Not only did it sell well in the U.S., but Crash was one of the few American videogames to attract a large following in Japan.

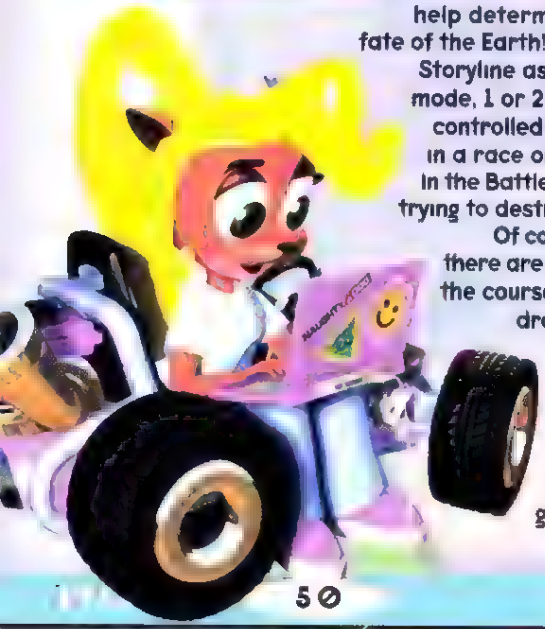
After the original was released in 1996, two sequels followed. Then to the dismay of platform gamers everywhere, it was announced that there would be no installment for 1999. My sorrow was short-lived, however, when I learned that Crash and company would instead be featured in a racing game.

The challenge, of course, was to meet the standard set by Nintendo's Mario Kart 64. I'm a big fan of that title and, as much as I love the PlayStation, I didn't know if it was possible to achieve the same level of brilliance on Sony's console. At the very least, I didn't think that the multi-player element could be replicated on the PlayStation without a serious loss of speed. On the other hand, I believed if anyone could do it, Naughty Dog could. And they have!



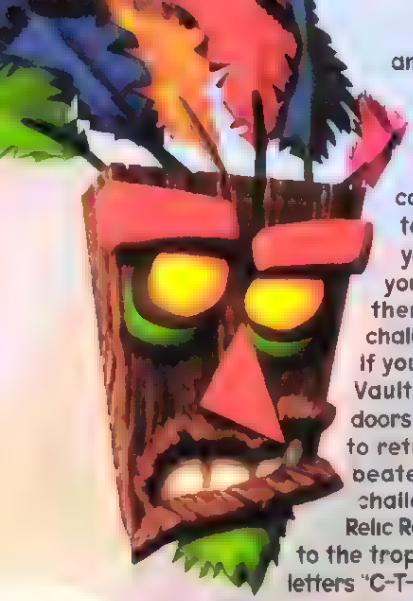
Here's the scoop: An evil alien named Nitros Oxide, who travels the galaxy trying to satisfy his addiction to speed, has come to our planet to challenge our greatest racer. The stakes are high — if Nitros wins, he plans to pave over the entire planet! Friend and foe alike have put aside their differences to challenge each other to a series of races which will help determine who among them is the best. The victor will go on to meet Nitros in a battle for the fate of the Earth!

Storyline aside, CTR features your basic Arcade, Versus, Time Trial, and Battle modes. In the Arcade mode, 1 or 2 human players can pick their characters and the track and compete with a field of CPU-controlled opponents. In the Versus mode, you can challenge anywhere from 1 to 3 human opponents in a race on any of the tracks. In the Time Trial mode, you're simply trying to post the fastest times. In the Battle Mode, racing is thrown out the window — you're trying to destroy up to 3 of your friends (or enemies).



Of course, CTR isn't just a plain old racing game. First, there are weapons and items located in crates throughout the courses that can be used to your advantage. You can drop TNT and poison beakers in someone's path, or shoot bowling bombs or missiles at them, and can "juice up" these weapons by collecting Wumpa Fruit. Second, the courses themselves feature obstacles such as rolling boulders, wayward armadillos, lava eruptions, rock, snow, and ice. Thankfully, they also have pads which give a turbo boost, ramps, and lots of shortcuts





and secret passageways.

The heart of CTR is the Adventure Mode. "Warp points" will take you from the main map to the starting lines of various courses. You've got to win the race to earn a trophy, which will allow you access to further races. After you have won the four trophies in a themed area, you'll face a more challenging boss in a 1-on-1 challenge. If you can defeat him, he'll give you a Vault Key. This key not only opens the doors to other areas, but also allows you to return to courses you have already beaten. Why? Because two further challenges await — the CTR Token and Relic Races. The former is nearly identical to the trophy race, with the addition of the letters "C-T-R" placed somewhere in the course. Not only do you have to go out of your way to obtain these letters, but you still have to finish in first place. If you do, you will be awarded a colored CTR token. Obtain four of the same colored tokens and you can enter a four-course Gem Cup race to earn a colored Gem. Earning all five gems opens a bonus track.

As for the Relic Race, this is a race against the clock. Item boxes are replaced with Time Crates that freeze the clock for a set number of seconds. If you break all the Time Crates in a course you will also be rewarded with a 10 second reduction in your overall time. Depending on your final time you will be awarded a Sapphire, Gold, or Platinum relic. These relics provide you with access to a bonus track. As if that wasn't enough variety, each area also contains a challenge which requires you to recover 20 Purple Crystals in a set amount of time, in four unique arenas.

Okay, you say, so CTR looks like it has a wealth of options. But how does it look, sound, and play? In a nutshell, awesome! The graphics are what we have come to expect from the Naughty Dog team — colorful and crisp, making you feel like you are inside a ride at Disneyland. Fans of the Crash platform games will immediately recognize some of the surroundings, since the courses take place in icy regions, in castle laboratories, and jungle pyramids. The music fits the game perfectly and scores points for not being too repetitive or annoying. All of the characters have their own vocalizations when they come up behind you or when they are hit with a weapon. These voices, in addition to the tire screeches, weapons fire, splashes, and so forth give the game a cartoon atmosphere. But don't be fooled — CTR really is a sophisticated racing game.

How so? The key gameplay element is the ability to gain a boost of power by sliding and hopping. You can get up to three separate boosts in a single slide, and the higher you hop from a ramp or ledge, the bigger the boost you get when you land. It takes a little bit of practice to master the art of the turbo slide but, once you've got it down, you'll see how much better the races can be. Instead of merely driving around the courses, you can slide and hop to boost your way to victory!

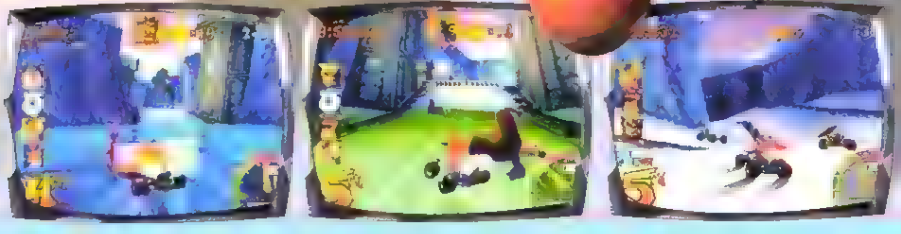
I still can't get over how fast the game runs, even in multi-player Battle Mode. Imagine a field of eight characters sliding through turns, tagging each other with missiles, accidentally slamming into TNT crates, activating turbo boosts, and catching huge air off ramps. The AI of the CPU opponents is just about perfect. They aren't too hard, which makes for a frustrating contest, but they aren't too easy either. They are just as likely to fire a missile into your behind when you're near the finish line, as you are to drop a Nitro Crate in their path.

With the various modes and an excellent multi-player contest, CTR has a lot of replay value. Even if you go to the trouble of obtaining every trophy, token, relic, and gem in order to see the best ending, you'll still want to go back and set some time trial records or explore hidden shortcuts. There are three extra Battle Mode courses which can be opened up as well, as a handful of boss characters which can be unlocked if you are good enough.

Crash Team Racing is the definitive cart racing game for the PlayStation. It has everything you would expect — fast-paced racing, an adventure mode, a multi-player battle mode, secrets, shortcuts, power-ups, tight controls, and a variety of courses. I've been trying to think of a flaw in this game-any flaw — and I've come up empty-handed. That's never happened before!

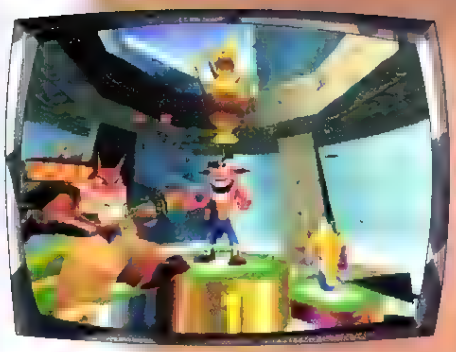
MARK





A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH NAUGHTY DOG





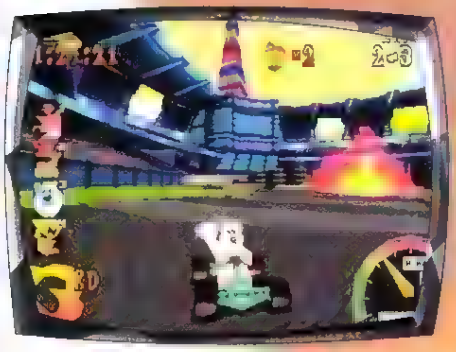


As [illegible] Naughty Dog Crash game, Crash Team Racing is the second game of the [illegible] Crash Bandicoot has [illegible] Crash fans have been keen [illegible] Naughty Dog's plans [illegible] Crash 3: The Huge Action2.

PSM: Why a "kart" style game? Why Crash Team Racing? Why make another clone?

JASON: Obviously, we have played the Mario Kart games in the past. There is no doubt that this game was inspired by our love of the Mario Kart 16-bit title as well as Mario Kart 64, but we wouldn't have started the game if we didn't think we could bring something to the mix and add something to the genre. There's absolutely no shame in continuing along genre lines. The movie industry does it all the time, the game industry does it all the time. The real question is, "when somebody picks up the joypad and then puts it down later, have they gained something they couldn't have gotten before that game came out?" We've added a bunch of things to CTR that bring the cart racing genre forward — things that haven't been done on any other cart racing game.

DAN: One of those things about the game that makes CTR so different is the controls are very tight. We chose early on









to make a really tight control spec, where you're actually able to control the cart very precisely on the track. We found that, by doing that, it led to a lot of other advantages. Once you have a control that's very precise, you can make the tracks much more aggressive, the turns much more interesting in detail and a lot of the obstacles are very specific about driving around things, not just fighting to stay on the track. We've seen in other racing games that there's a lot of softness and sort of mushiness to the control. That was a style that allowed for interaction, but the interaction was all about just kind of staying on the track. You'll see with CTR that it's a lot more than staying on the track. It's about choosing perfect lines and, within that tight control spec, being able to be more aggressive with what exactly the player does moment to moment.



PSEx: In the game, we see a lot of elements from the Crash games. How difficult was it to "create" uses for all of the items in the game?

JASON: Actually, it was probably more difficult to figure out what to cut out, then it was figuring out what to put in. The universe is so rich and it has, after three platform games, so many elements to draw from, we have 15 playable characters and we had to restrict ourselves from a number that's above 30. You can probably name some of the major characters that we had to cut along the way. Likewise, with the weapons, there's been so many weapons of different types across the games that trying to narrow it down to things that will work for the gameplay and just work together was quite difficult. There's been probably 90 levels between the three Crash games, so trying to narrow that down to 18 tracks and 7 battle modes was actually difficult in itself. So, definitely the question was not "what do we have to put in", but" what do we have to keep out?"

PSEx: The game seems to have a definite focus on combat elements. Why is combat such an important part of the game?

DAN: At Naughty Dog, all the people that work at Naughty Dog are extreme gamers. Everybody here is extremely competitive in multiplayer games. We've played Goldeneye, we've played battle mode in Mario Kart, we've played other games that are a lot about multiplayer and battle mode just kind of lends itself naturally to that really good competitive two player, three player and four player in-your-face competition. We realized that that was a lot of the replay value of previous cart games. There are a lot of combinations as well as customizable battle conditions, how you win and how you lose, and also the weapons that are available you can turn on and off. We really thought that was an important aspect, because the replay value there is so complete.

PSEx: How difficult was it creating an AI that would challenge players, yet not totally dominate them?

DAN: There was a lot of difficulty because, when you're playing multiplayer, human against human, it is much more rich and the richness of the interactions are amazing. You really think in terms of human strategy and human reactions to the things that are happening. What we wanted to do was to simulate that as well as we could, but also to give you a dynamic difficulty adjustment. We wanted the advanced players to really be challenged by this game, in terms of racing, but we also knew that there were going to be a lot of players who haven't played racing games all that often, or just aren't as good or as adept as some of the more advanced players out there. We have dynamic adjustment in the game and the AI adjusts in real time based on the gameplay. That was difficult in itself. Actually, the biggest challenge we had was to make sure the AI was in fact racing each other and fighting each other. If you watch the game, you'll see in CTR that there's a huge amount of interaction between the computer players – firing at each other, shooting, dropping things on each other, and it really gives a sense of playing against other humans.

JASON: Which doesn't happen in either Mario Kart or in Diddy Kong Racing. The characters basically don't interact with each other, they use themselves as a team against you and spread out and try to block you and their speed sets your speed. They don't interact with each other. In CTR, they're actually competitive with each other. There are many times where you'll see one of them fire a missile at another and that guy will blow up and bounce up and down right in front of you. You end up hitting them so, through their interaction with each other, you're getting a little bit of a challenge here and there. It helps you every now and then – the guy in first place is shot by the guy in third place, you happen to be in second place – wait, you're in first place. It's really kind of neat, so it feels like far more of an AI than just a constant follow-the-leader, set a pace and you go up against them.



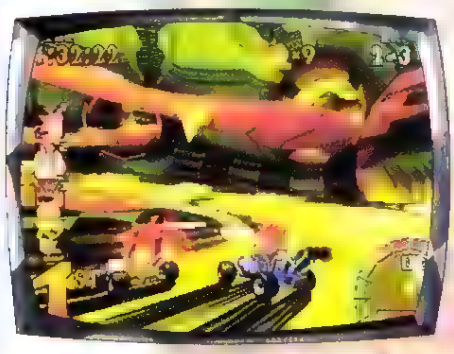
PSEx: So, what you're saying is that, if you play better, the game will get harder and, if you don't play very well, the game will get easier?

JASON: Of course. That's been the case with every Crash game besides the original Crash Bandicoot.

PSEx: Can you tell us a bit about the five different modes in CTR?

JASON: Sure. The arcade mode is setup so that you can just hop into levels very quickly and just play. You can select a difficulty level of easy, medium or hard, which is quite different than adventure mode in which its sets its difficulty level against you. You can be a beginning player and set it on hard and never win because you're just not good enough, or you can be a really good player and set it on easy and win quite easily. It lets you pick a track, any track, go right into that track, play against other cars and set the difficulty to easy, medium or hard. It also allows you to select a cup mode, which allows you to race four races in a row. There are four cups in the game. If you beat all four of the easy cups then you get a secret character unlocked, then you go onto them in medium, etc., etc. Versus mode is no AI characters so that is just you against somebody else in the game, some other human player. That's good for situations where you get so competitive that if there's an AI car that happens to blast player A, then he says "Well it's not your win player B, because I got blasted by the AI guy." If you want to kind of clear them out and play mano a mano, you can play versus mode. You can also do arcade in two-player. The next mode would be battle mode, which I think is self-explanatory, although within that you have tons of different decisions to make. You can play a time limit, you can play first to 10 kills, you can play everyone has three lives, or six lives or nine lives. It's all fully adjustable, and when you lose your lives you're out – for example, player one might be out of the game and two, three and four might still be playing. As Dan was saying earlier, you can set any type of team combination. It does make a difference. Three on one is actually a very fun thing to play, not only for the team of three, but also for the team of one. You can fire at anybody and, if you hit them, it's a score for you, but the three team has to worry about hitting themselves and actually subtracting a cumulative point from themselves as a team. It is an interesting dynamic. Time trial mode is self-explanatory; no one else on the track, no power-ups on the track. It's just you against the course. You can save ghosts so you can see yourself on your last best time. You can eventually open up Entropy, the boss from Crash 3, who will come out and say, "OK you've gotten pretty good at this track, now see if you can beat my time." Then you have to go up against him, and once you've beaten him, which is difficult but not impossible, he says, "OK, you're pretty tough there guy so why don't you go up against Nitrous Oxide?" And Oxide comes out and he is a real beast. To beat him is to say you're an incredible player on that track. If you beat him on every track that's saying you're a really, really incredible player overall. Adventure mode is kind of a tribute to the old Crash games. You've got 100% that you can get, you don't have to get 100% to win the game and fight the final boss. You do have to race every track and get a trophy to beat him. If you want 100%, not only do you have to race every track, you have to race it again to get





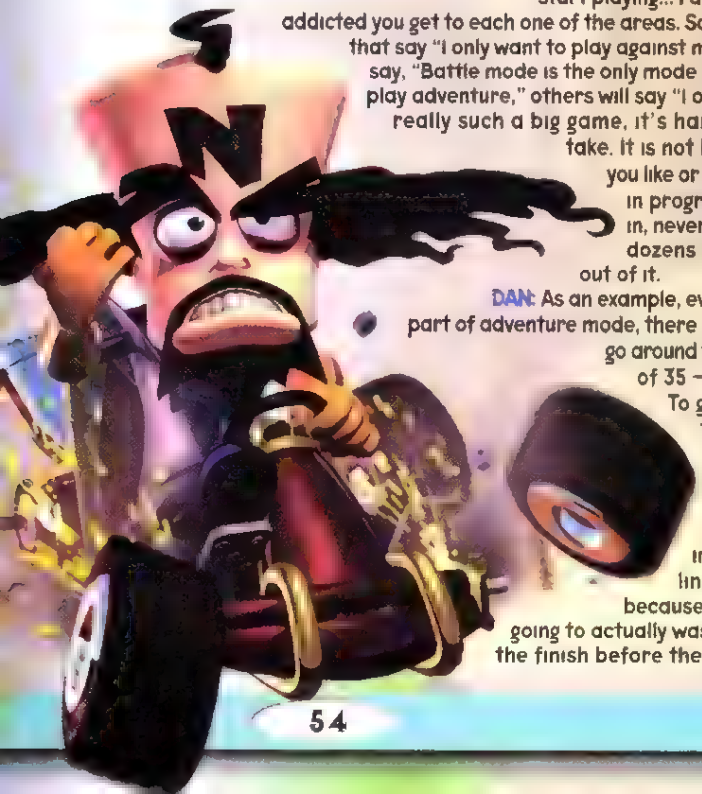




a "C," a "T" and an "R" letter to get a token. You also have to race it in Relic race, which is out of Crash 3. That is the time boxes that you hit — 1 second, 2 seconds, 3 seconds. It's very different than time trial because it requires precision driving to get the boxes as opposed to the best line. Sometimes you need to go the worst line, because that happens to be where two 3 second boxes are and you end up reducing your overall time. Likewise, if you get the boxes in Relic race you get 10 seconds, which on any track is a major deduction for you in time. You're really going for a perfect. You get sapphire, gold and platinum times on that, just like you did in Crash 3. In addition, there are battle mode areas in one player with crystals scattered around and you have to go around and get the crystals in a certain amount of time. You have bosses to contend with that race differently than the normal AI characters that you're up against. You have cup races, which you have to beat, which allow you to get gems. You can't actually get to them until you get the CTR tokens. There are a couple secret tracks to open and eventually you beat Oxide and you get an extra special treat — a kind of tribute to the last five years for Naughty Dog of making four Crash games. It's really a ton of stuff, which has been quite a challenge for the testers here to get through because we burn a new disc and it takes you hours just to go through and test everything once. It's quite a large game.

PSEx: You say hours. What kind of playtime is required to beat the game?

JASON: That depends on what you're asking about. If you're asking about adventure mode and you know exactly what to do, and you're an extremely good player, you're talking probably four hours, which is actually longer than Crash 3. So, that gives you an idea of how long adventure mode is. If you also include opening up all the secret characters by going through adventure mode, doing a few time trials to open up Entropy, if you're talking about a few battle modes and then you get your friends over and you start playing... I don't know. It really depends on how addicted you get to each one of the areas. Some people may be the kind of folks that say "I only want to play against myself and time trial." Other people say, "Battle mode is the only mode I play." Some people say, "I want to play adventure," others will say "I only play races against friends." It's really such a big game, it's hard to judge how long it's going to take. It is not like Crash 3 where you said either you like or don't like going through all the levels in progression. Certainly people can come in, never play adventure mode, and still get dozens and dozens of hours of gameplay out of it.



DAN: As an example, even in Relic race, which is just a sub-part of adventure mode, there is a huge amount of strategy as you go around to get the boxes. There is an average of 35 — 70 boxes on each of the tracks. To get the lowest time, not only to get the perfect by getting all of the boxes, you have to really pick and choose which boxes you are going to take, because it does require you to determine the line. For instance, a three box next to a start line you want to get on the first lap because if you get it on the last lap you're going to actually waste some time because you'll cross the finish before the three seconds is over. There are strategies, even in the Relic race, that are extremel complex. Around here, we've just had some hug addictive gameplay where people have been tryin to one-up the other person in Relic race. You can thin you have the perfect path and then someone will com up with some new trick up their sleeve and find different way that's better. We've just found an amazin amount of replay like that

PSEx: You've mentioned hidden characters, an hidden tracks. What is available at the beginning an what is hidden?

JASON: You start with eight characters, but ther are 15 total that you can play, so it's almost double It starts to look like a Street Fighter character selectio screen once you've opened everybody up. It's like reall really full. There are a lot of characters out there. I terms of levels, you start with 17 open levels and 4 batt mode tracks. There's one secret level and three secre battle mode tracks. You get a good deal of extra batt mode in there and also you get a fun track to rac around and test your turbo abilities on.

PSEx: How difficult was it to implement the four player simultaneous mode without killing the framerate

JASON: That was the challenge of this game. Th challenge of this game was to say, "With Crash 2, Naught Dog probably had the best engine that year on th PlayStation." That was our opinion, but we also won couple of awards that said that. A year after that Spyro came out and it was a damn nice engine an there's certainly an argument would say that Crash didn't quite reach Spyro's engine accomplishment. Ou goal with this game was to, in one-player, outdo th Spyro engine. That was our goal from the beginning Farther vistas; when you get close to things, don't hav them rezzed out — basically a completely and utterl seamless from near to far engine. On top of that, w had the added challenge that this all has to work i four-player as well. Let me tell you, there's quite challenge in doing in a quarter of the resolution jus based on the fact the screen's got to be divided int four. Four times the total amount of drawing; obvious it gets quite tough to keep that framerate up which I'm really proud of the programmer's ability to do that. It their greatest accomplishment. That was the challeng of this game.

PSEx: Do you feel confident that you've met bot of those goals?

JASON: I do. Very confident.

PSEx: Are there any plans to take the engine fro CTR and use it in other projects or is this a one-sho deal?

JASON: This is our last PlayStation title. This is als Naughty Dog's last Crash product. There are technologie in this engine, which believe it or not, are extremel valuable as we go forward into the PlayStation2. We'v already begun development of a PlayStation2 title an they are using some of the technologies that we create for this game. Whether or not this specific engine move on, no, this is it — we get one-shot with this engine o the PlayStation. Unfortunately, we weren't smart enoug to do it with Crash 1 and it's a little too late to kee using it on the PlayStation. Certainly a lot of th technology that we've created will live on in th PlayStation2.

PSEx: Can you tell us anything about what you're doing with the PlayStation2?

JASON: Unfortunately I can't — for multiple reasons. The first is that we're not that far into it and the second is obviously we're not really talking about it right now.

PSEx: Why is this going to be the last Crash title? Is he being retired permanently?

JASON: Naughty Dog actually doesn't own Crash. We had a three-project deal with Universal that we signed in 1994 and the projects ended up being Crash 1, Crash 2 and Crash 3. The fact that there is a CTR is really a tribute to not only our love for Crash and our desire to continue working with him on the PlayStation, but also Sony's desire to see Crash do another title. They went to Universal and said, "Naughty Dog's moved on, but they're working on a game that could use Crash and they would love it if you guys could license, for one more game, the Crash characters." It made sense for all parties, so we ended up with our fourth Crash title.

PSEx: So, what you're saying is that CTR started life as a non-Crash game?

JASON: That's correct. CTR started out as "we wanted to do a racing game and we didn't care if we had Crash or not." We thought this was going to be fun. The fact that we got to use Crash is absolutely a blessing. I can't now, looking back, imagine what we would have ended up with if we didn't have Crash. I love the character. Having said that, we had decided somewhere along the Crash 2 period that Naughty Dog was going to do a racing game on the PlayStation, because no one had done a good job of it. No one had done a great multiplayer racing game on the PlayStation and it needs one.

PSEx: What, aside from the four-player mode, was the biggest problem that you encountered while developing the game?

DAN: This is a balancing monster. The permutations of all the combinations of characters and tracks and power-ups and everything that goes within that is just a huge monster to tune correctly, to make sure that you're not frustrated or blaming the game for something that's going wrong. That was a big, big challenge for us early on — to make sure that we'd correctly stratified all the different elements in the game so we knew that we wouldn't have a character who was so fast and so much better than the other characters that that's the only character everybody wanted to play. Along the same lines, we didn't want to have a power-up that was the only power-up you absolutely wanted to have. There were a lot of issues there with playtesting and balancing and going back over the numbers over and over again. Just a lot of pounding on the joystick to get to where we went to — which is well balanced and organized.

JASON: There were a lot of challenges. There was the challenge of creating eight characters on screen that looked as high quality as Crash did when he was the only main character on the screen. Most of the other games on the PlayStation that are attempting racing games are either non-polygonal or they don't have necks or arms or legs or whatever. They've taken some serious shortcuts to get around the fully polygonal character issues — especially the wheels on other games take major hits. There's some pretty nifty technology in just getting those characters out there. We also had the huge challenge that we wanted to do this game in a short period of time. Sony said, "Look, next Christmas is probably going to be our biggest Christmas." As everyone in the press starts to focus on the future, the Dreamcast and the PlayStataion2, the gaming public is still focused on the PlayStation. They're still buying more PlayStations than they are Dreamcasts. We needed to bring this title out in a timely fashion, bring it out this Christmas. So, when the parents are going in and buying the $99 PlayStations, they see a game that's completely friendly for a family. Likewise, older kids see a game that they can yell at their friends while playing. It's just a perfect fit for this Christmas, but that was a very short development cycle. For the artists, it was only eight months on the project. We wanted all the characters to be able to talk at the same time in the game, to have long sentences. We had to create a huge sound system to handle that.



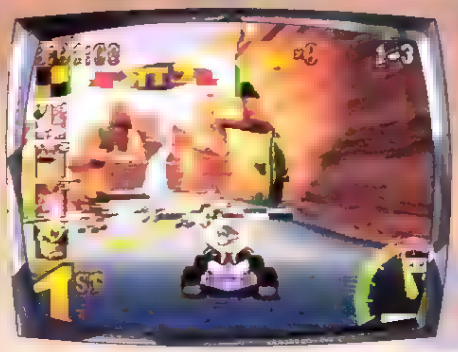
PSEx: Were there any great ideas that you had, that didn't make it into the game? What is your one "wish list" item that you wanted to get in, but couldn't?

JASON: Looking back, the real question is "why didn't we stop adding features earlier?" Here we are 13 days from final and a week and a half ago we added the cup races in arcade mode. We kinda came at this with a "let's put the kitchen sink in this game" approach so that everybody will find a mode that he or she likes. I think the more pertinent question is, "we probably could have gotten away with less, why did we put so much in?" because it's creating a debugging nightmare right at the end. We'll get it all out and it will be fine in the end. There isn't actually anything that we wanted to put in that we didn't put in.

PSEx: What's it like knowing that you're done with Crash and you're going into your next title, and the PlayStation2, with a clean slate?

JASON: I think you said it — it's a clean slate. It's both exciting and, of course, scary. This is our best friend here. I've spent more time with Crash than I did in college (and I did graduate by the way). It's been a significant amount of time that we've spent with this character and obviously our artists know this character back and front. Now, we're doing something different. Having said that, we designed Crash for the PlayStation. He's orange because it displays orange well. He's of the height he is because his face had to be a certain size so you could see his emotion. He's short compared to his face, because he couldn't take up the full screen, otherwise you couldn't see the background. He has spikes instead of hair because you can see spikes more clearly. He has a really big mouth so you can see his smile. He has really big eyes so you can see which direction his eyes are looking. The character himself was designed with the PlayStation specs in mind. When you double the resolution in both directions, your face can become a quarter of the size and still have the same number of pixels in it. Different rules apply. You can put hair on something because you have 50 times as many polygons in the character. You can make the character have much better skin. You can put armor on it that has an armory sheen. You can do so many things that, to go into the PlayStation2 with Crash, to us, is kinda like going in with handcuffs. We're kind of excited about the fact that the door is open and we can walk in absolutely any direction. It's really exciting.



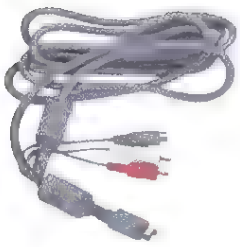


DAN: It's really exciting to see where the future is going for us. The next generation is going to be about the ability to create more atmosphere and mood than ever before. It's just an exciting concept to be able to take this star cast of artists that we have here and just unleash them on a much larger polygon set to be able to create atmosphere and mood and places. The technology that we have here with the programmers... We really have always had these ideas of what we want to do in the future and now the possibilities are becoming more open and the boundaries are moving out. It's really exciting for a designer.

- S[illegible]s to Jason and Dan for taking [illegible] as well as [illegible] at Sony for setting it up.



GENERIC KNOCKOFFS ARE
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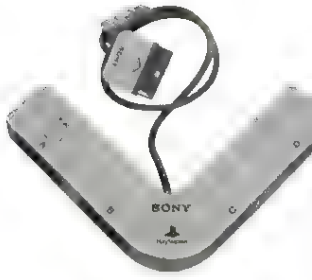
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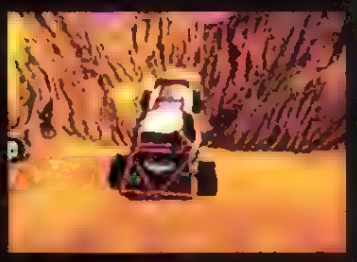
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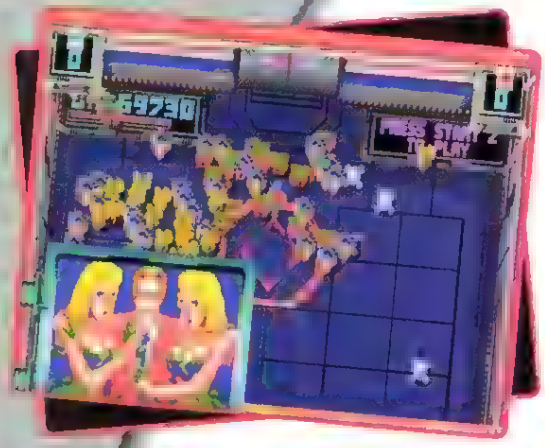
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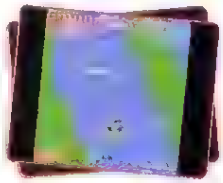
ARCADE PARTY PACK

october



We've covered Midway's Arcade Party Pack in all of its various iterations throughout the last four or five months. Originally planned as a two-CD, 12 game retro-compilation, it's been seriously trimmed back to a meager six games. This is definitely a bummer, considering that some of the titles left on the chopping block included Stun Runner, Wizard of Wor, Guantlet III, Rampart, Satan's Hollow, Gorf and APB. The leftover six read as Toobin, Klax, Smash TV, Rampage, 720 and Super Sprint – all great games in their own right (well, except for maybe Rampage). While unlike Namco's Museum series, Midway still has quite a ways to go before scraping the bottom of the barrel, were told their Arcade Party Pack (developed by the talented emulation team at Digital Eclipse) might just be the last of the "Greatest Hits" series. Arcade Party Pack is currently scheduled for an October release and we should have a review in next month's issue.

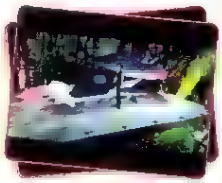




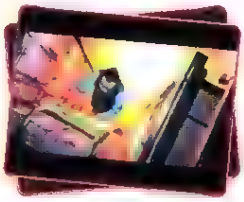

eidos

FEAR EFFECT

january



For reasons unknown, Eidos/ Kronos' Resident Evil-style Fear Factor has been renamed to Fear Effect, but the game remains the same. If you've missed the coverage in previous issues, this highly stylized, futuristic adventure borrows a little from Resident Evil, a little from Metal Gear Solid and even a bit from Activsion/Infogrames' early PS title, Time Commando. The end result is a story intensive game that mixes pre-rendered backgrounds seamlessly with real-time FMV bits, giving it a distinctive cinema-like feel. The story is set in the gritty future and revolves around a group of mercenaries who have taken it upon themselves to find the missing daughter of a powerful warlord in order to claim the reward. From the few, early levels we've been able to play, it's clear the developers are looking to mix some stealth elements into the game – you can sneak up to enemies and kill them with one shot hits if they don't detect you – with light puzzle solving – find the key card to open the door, etc. While it's too early to tell, it looks like this title could potentially be very cool. We'll have more to comment on next issue.



konami

INT'L TRACK & FIELD 2

december

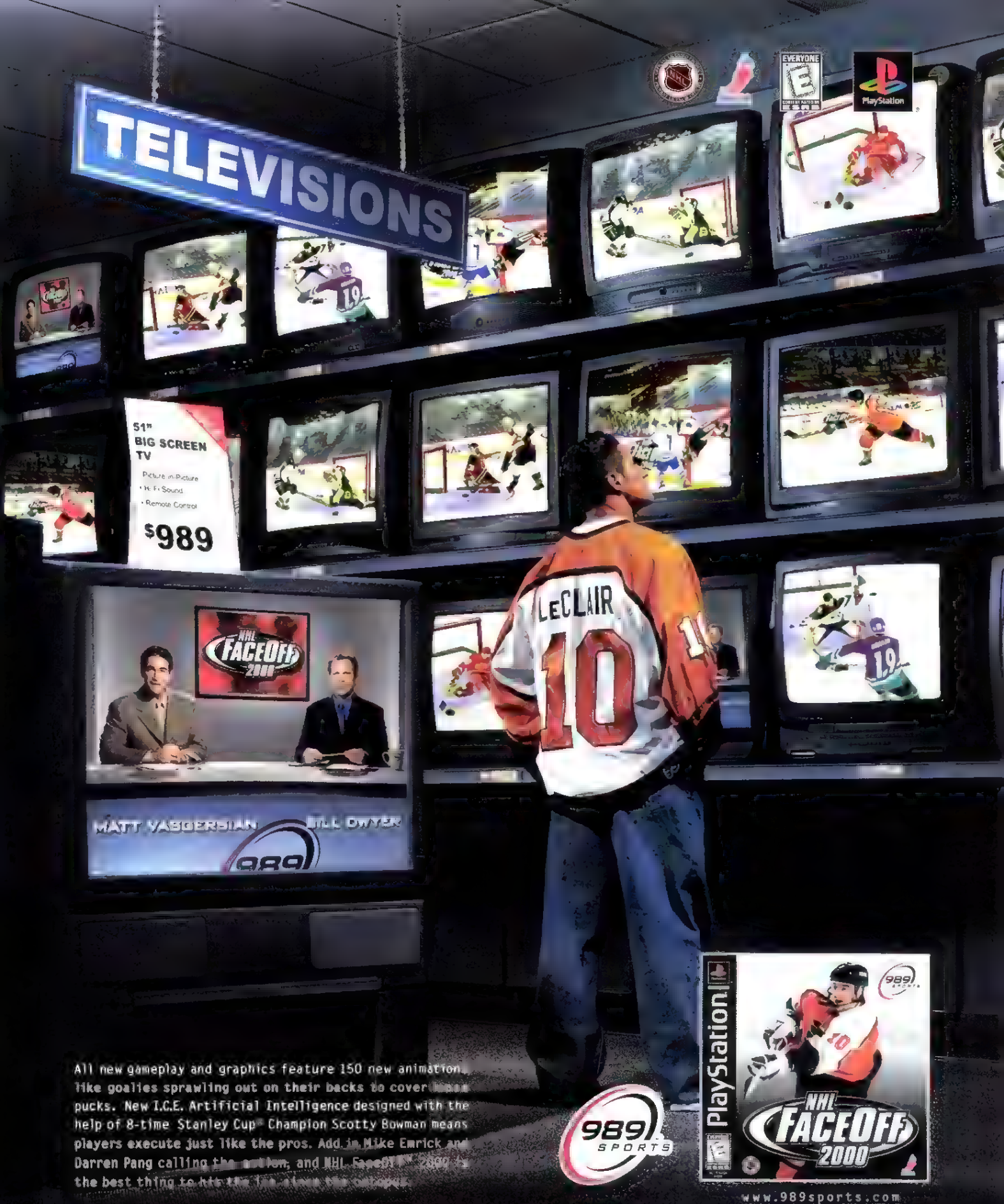
If you've been playing games as long as we have, then you probably have fond memories of hanging out at the local arcade/bowling alley/7-Eleven back in the day and doing some serious button-mashing on Konami's original Track & Field. While the series certainly has come a long way from 2D sprites and 16 colors on-screen at one time, the basic gameplay remains the same – mash those buttons until your fingers turn raw. This year's version includes all of the perennial favorites events, such as the 100m dash, the pole vault and vault, the hammer throw, and the Javelin, as well as some new entries: Canoeing, Match Sprint, 1km Time Trial (bike), 50m Free Style (swimming), and even Weightlifting. As with the first PlayStation T&F, number two allows for up to four player competition with the use of a multi-tap, making this the perfect party title. Look for International Track & Field to ship sometime in December.











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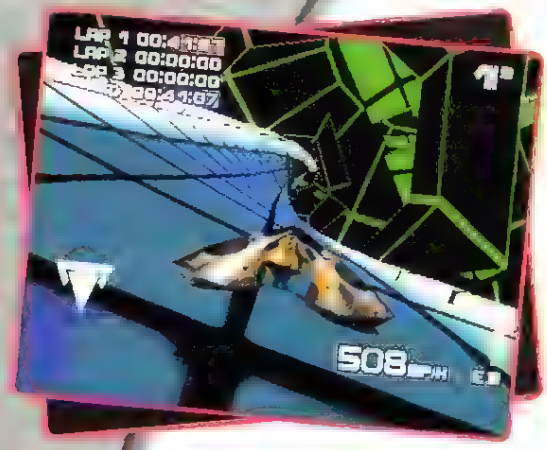
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crave

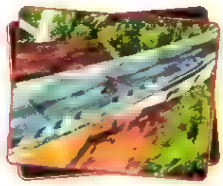
KILLER LOOP

december



Is there an official PlayStation racing game of the new millennium yet? We haven't heard of one, but we would be willing to bet ($1) that Crave's Killer Loop (formerly known as Mag 3) would be a top contender. It boasts some super-fast frame rates along with a Wipeout style atmosphere. Where the game will separate itself from other futuristic racers is with track design. Using specially engineered pod-like ships, which can be magnetized to grip tight turns and vertical faces, you zip your way around tracks with hairpin curves, crazy jumps and killer loops. As with any game set in the future, you will be given the ability to cause destruction. There are three levels of both the offensive and defensive weapons ideal for making sure the opposition knows who's #1. For multiplayer fans, there is also split screen action running at a super frame rate. Naturally, Killer Loop implements the Dual Shock, and very well from the preview version we check out. Look for a full review next month.

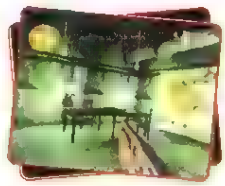


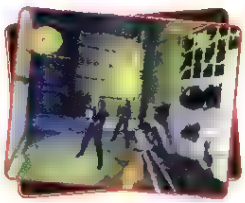



electronic arts

MEDAL OF HONOR

november



A few, new screen shots of Medal of Honor, EA/Dreamworks' impressive first-person shooter, came in just as we were going to press. Although we haven't been able to get our hands on an updated rev of the game, it would be a shame not to show and talk about this potential blockbuster title one more time before we review it. If you haven't caught any of our previous coverage, MoH lays claim to be the first World War II-themed action/adventure title developed for the PlayStation. Inspired by none other than Mr. Spielberg himself, players take on the role of an agent in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) – the United States wartime spy and covert operations agency, who aided the Allied Forces in an effort to thwart the Nazi takeover of Europe. Historically and technically accurate down to the most minute detail, this game is very impressive. Some of the features include 12 WWII-era weapons, 30 levels spanning eight missions, over 20 different enemies with separate animations dependent on where they're shot, the ability to disguise yourself with a fallen guard's uniform, and stealth elements (you use dark areas and shadows to go unnoticed. If all goes well, we'll have the review in next month's issue.

infogrames

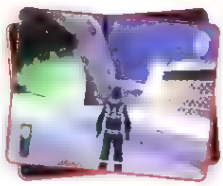
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

november






In a strange twist of fate, Mission Impossible, a game that was originally announced as a launch title for the N64 only to be delayed well over a year-and-a-half, has made its way to the PlayStation. While the N64 version wasn't that well-received (we actually thought it was quite decent), Infogrames is banking on the PlayStation version to sell some decent numbers. Thankfully, X-ample, the developers didn't take the quick and dirty port route and, instead, have taken their time to focus on the PlayStation's strengths in order to make the game look and work well on the system. The result is pretty impressive. In the game, players will assume the role of Ethan Hunt, Impossible Mission field agent, as he works his way through five diverse missions spanning 20 levels. Based loosely on the movie, the action takes place in both first and third-person perspectives and mixes both action/adventure with puzzle solving. Some of the game's features include a variety of weapons and gadgets to use – dart guns, gas injectors, smoke generators, blowpipes, field scanners, wire cutters, night vision goggles and even the face maker – high-resolution, CG cut-screens, chrome and environment mapping and spoken dialog (the last three were not in the N64 version).



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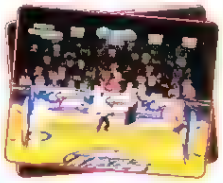
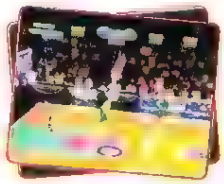
midway

NBA SHOWTIME

november



While Midway has had its share of hits and misses on the PlayStation in the past (San Francisco Rush, anyone?) they seem to have hit their stride and are currently working on a few impressive original games as well as translating some of their more popular arcade titles. NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC takes the 3Dfx-enhanced coin-op hit and does a decent job of downsizing it for the PlayStation. This NBA JAM-style two-on-two basketball game incorporates motion captured moves and animations (including crossover dribbles, no-look passes, and rim-rocking dunks), hidden characters, and over 120 detailed NBA stars to make an addictive and super-fun single and multi-player experience. In addition, the game will feature all 29 NBA teams with the option to customize them with both real and created players, a host of real and fantasy courts, four player simultaneous action with the use of a multi-tap, sweet spots on the court, an on-fire mode and limited rules and regulations. Look for Showtime to hit retail in time for the holiday rush.

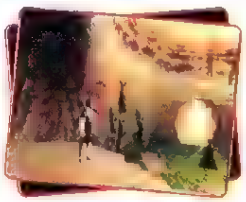

fox interactive

PLANET OF THE APES

3rd quarter 2k









Due to their film and television tie-ins, Fox Interactive has a wealth of licenses and properties they can tap into for potential video game cross-overs. In addition to Buffy the Vampire Slayer, they solely own the rights to the Planet of the Apes franchise, a cult TV and movie series that, even though there hasn't been any new material in years, is still widely recognized and known from both adult and kids alike. So, it doesn't take a genius (or a talking ape) to figure out that the video game could be very cool. In this 3D, third-person action/adventure you take on the role of Ulysses, the sole human survivor of a crew of astronaughts who crash-landed on an uncharted planet 1,000 years in the future. Just like in the films, you soon discover evolution has taken a cruel twist, and apes have become the rulers of the world. In a bid for survival, you will have to use your wits, cunning and brute strength to progress through the game and unravel the mystery of the compelling storyline. At this point, the game is very early and there is no other information to print. We'll be back in a future issue with more as soon as possible.





midway

READY2RUMBLE

november

While definitely a testament and showcase to the Dreamcast's power, the PlayStation version of Ready 2 Rumble Boxing doesn't look half-bad in comparison. Looking and playing a lot like an updated, 3D version of Nintendo's popular Punch Out series, R2R features Michael Buffer's trademark call, "Let's Get Ready to Rumble," and gives the players the opportunity to compete as one of 16 boxers, each with their own distinct fighting style. In this zany boxing game, each boxer has been modeled "hyper-realistically" and comes with an unlimited number of punch combinations for both realistic and over-the-top boxing styles. Players will have the ability to compete in an arcade-style mode, contend for a championship belt, or play head-to-head. In addition, the game features a Championship Mode, in which players can take on the role of both the boxer and manager, assuming control of both money management — signing boxers, buying equipment, etc., and training — working out in the gym, building power, making your way through the ranks. We'll have our final judgement on R2R when it steps into the ring this November.






IS IT THE SECOND ACT OR THE SECOND COMING? IS IT AN EVOLUTION OR A REVOLUTION?

IS IT A SEQUEL OR A QUANTUM LEAP? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF TWO? TOO? TO?

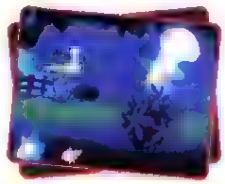
COMING SOON ***GRAN TURISMO 2***

RATING PENDING
RP
ESRB

infogrames
SMURFS
november



Anyone who's been playing home video games for the last 15 years should fondly remember the Smurfs ColecoVision game which, for its time, was a colorful and technical marvel. So, in the most manliest way possible, us veterans here at Dimension Publishing are squealing with glee at the prospect of a 3D, Pandemonium-style Smurf PlayStation game – even if it is geared toward younger players. In the game, players will assume the role of Hefty Smurf, who has been charged with going out and collecting food for the newest addition to the Smurf village – a little baby Smurf. The game is actually divided into two parts – an initiation set of levels geared for the very young and novice gamers, and a second, more complex set for those ready for more of a challenge. The actual gameplay harkens back to the 16-bit era, with plenty of action/platforming (as well as a fair share of butt-bouncing) to be had. Of course, the full Smurf cast is here, including Papa Smurf, Smurfette, Gargamel and Azreal. In addition to the 3D adventure, Infogrames has included a Tamagotchi-style mini-game where you are in charge of taking care of the virtual baby Smurf.



activision
SPIDERMAN
january








Spider-Man was first debuted at E3 last year with little fanfare. At the time, it was nothing more than a rolling vide demo of Spidey web-slinging his way through a 3D city of New York, as well as climbing on both building walls and ceilings. Needless to say, even from the early video we were extremely impressed. Developed by Neversoft (MDK, Apocalypse, Tony Hawk) and using a modified version of their flawless 3D Tony Hawk engine (which is actually a modified version of their Apocalypse engine), Spider-Man for the PlayStation is actually the first time Spidey will be in a video game in true 3D (a challenge for sure). While there's basically little-to-no concrete information on the title available to us at this point, we're told that players will have the unique experience as Spider-Man of exploring all of the exciting locales from the popular comic and cartoon series while fighting crime using his spider-abilities (which include web shooting/slinging, hand-to-hand combat and climbing on all and any surfaces). In the game, expect to encounter all of Spidey's most infamous foes, including Doctor Octopus, the Lizard and the Green Goblin. Spider-Man is tentatively set to ship this Spring.



infogrames
TEST DRIVE 6
november




Like the GameDay's, NHL's, NBA's and Need for Speed's, it's become commonplace to expect a new Test Drive from Infogrames (formerly Accolade) every year. As an all-new version of the largely successful Test Drive racing franchise, this year's model, Test Drive 6, promises to offer a completely new and revamped physics model, giving each of the 40 licensed vehicles their true and accurate driving style and handling. Also new this year, TD6 will feature interactive driving environments – including breakable objects, unexpected obstacles and nerve-racking shortcuts – a brand new AI engine which showcases multiple police chases that have more than one police car chasing an opponent, or more than one police chase taking place at one time, and improved high resolution graphics and environment mapping on the car models. Here's the short-list of licensed cars this year: Dodge Viper, Concept Daytona Charger and Challenger, Plymouth Hemi and Prowler, Ford '99 Mustang, '68 Mustang, '80s Mustang GT and F150 Lightning, Shelby Cobra, Saleen Mustang, TVR Cebera, Speed Twelve, Tuscan, Griffith and Chimaera, Aston Martin Project Vintage and V8 Vintage, and Caterham Super7. There's a lot more to report, but it will unfortunately have to wait for Eric's review in next month's issue.




Shoot to Score in 989 Sports™ NHL FaceOff™ 2000 Sweepstakes

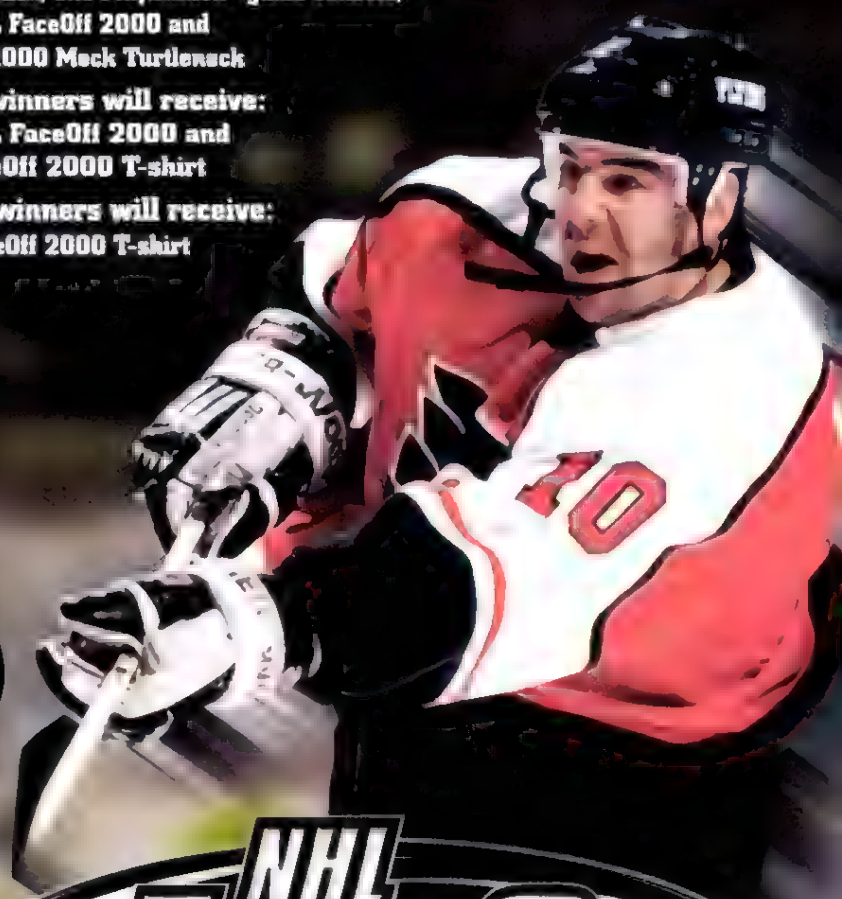
Five Grand Prize winners will receive:
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Five First Prize winners will receive:
One copy of NHL FaceOff 2000 and one NHL FaceOff 2000 T-shirt

10 Second Prize winners will receive:
One NHL FaceOff 2000 T-shirt







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TO ENTER:
Send a 4x6 postcard (no envelopes please) with your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number and email address (if applicable).

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P.O. Box 34012
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NHL FACEOFF 2000

989 SPORTS

PlayStation NHLPA

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FIGHTING FORCE 2

You're alone on this mission, so credentials are all you've got to go on.

It's just you and your instinct on this one. So you've only got yourself to blame if you fail. But that's not an option on this mission. As **Hawk Manson**, operative of the government espionage corps, SLOPS, your job is to maneuver in and out of R&D installations on **all new 3D game engine**. You've got **an arsenal of hand-to-hand combat moves** and equipment in the line of **20+ new weapons**. But don't let that isolate your head. Get going. The world won't save itself.

SI-COPS

PROFILE #1635



NAME: Hawk Manson

OCCUPATION: Espionage Operative

SECURITY CLEARANCE: Ultra Magnum

FIELD OF OPERATIONS: [redacted]

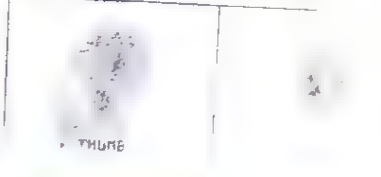
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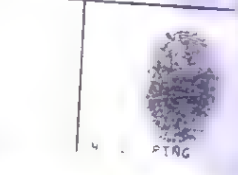
WEAPONS PROFICIENCY:
Pistol
Grenade Launcher
Shotgun
Sniper Rifle
Assault Rifle
Knife
Sword
Stun Baton
Grav Gun
Industrial Beam Laser
Flame Thrower
Crossbow
Axe

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:
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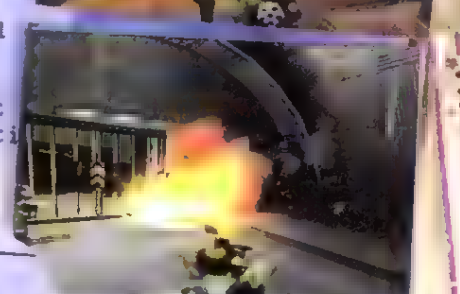














MANSON, HAWK

Sega Dreamcast

PlayStation

EIDOS

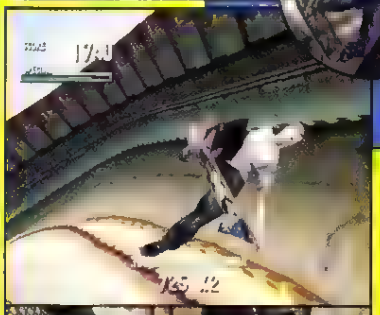
REVIEWED BY:
CHRIS KRAMER

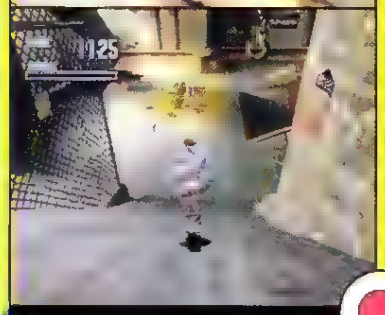
GENRE:	Skateboarding
PUBLISHED BY:	Activision
DEVELOPED BY:	Neversoft
ORIGIN:	US
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

TONY HAWK
PRO SKATER

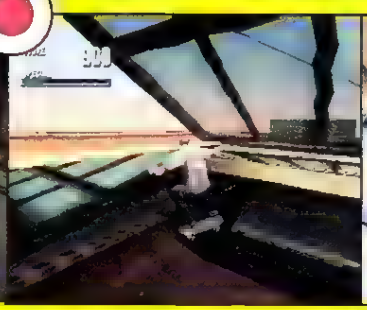






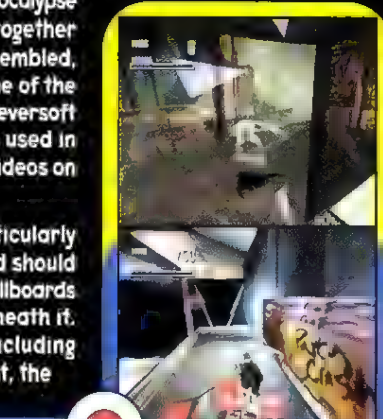














My first reaction after playing Tony Hawk for five straight hours, was to turn to Greg and say: "I think I'm going to give this game our first one hundred percent score." Which caused a serious flap in the office, naturally. "No game is perfect," I was told. "There's no such thing." I decided to play some more to reach a final verdict. After playing nonstop for the next three days – full eight hour days, mind you, not twenty minute sessions here and there – I came to the conclusion that, while not totally perfect, Pro Skater is as damn close to gaming perfection as I've ever come across.

This game succeeds on a near-transcendent level. Never have I sat down with a game that is so immediately entertaining and flat-out fun. Regardless of the type of gamer you are – hardcore, casual, sports nut, action fiend, whatever – there is an element to this game that will suck you in and make you quite happy. For the casual types, the game is fast and it is very easy to get up in the air and do some spine-destroying stunts. Heck, you don't even have to compete if you're not into going for points; you can just scoot around the levels and goof off. For the serious, however, there's an extremely competitive Career Mode that will keep you glued to the couch (floor, comfy chair, whatever you play games in or on) until you've figured out where the hidden items are or how to quickly rack up the most points for big stunts.

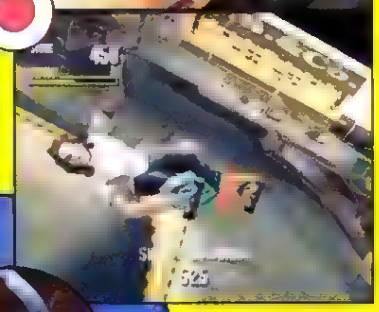
A 3D graphic engine this impressive, even at the end of the PlayStation's lifecycle when we feel like we've just about seen it all, is something to marvel at. As I've said before in other reviews, speed is crucial in sports or racing games, and since Pro Skater is a little of both, pokey framerates just ain't gonna cut it. It's so hard to believe that this is essentially the same 3D engine that powered "Apocalypse," the near-universally vilified game that starred the digitally enhanced head of Bruce Willis. Of course, Apocalypse wasn't really Neversoft's fault; they came in last minute and threw together the existing diverse elements of crap that Activision had already assembled, cranking out a game that just had to ship in order to make back some of the money spent on development costs. One of the cool innovations that Neversoft created for Apocalypse is the streaming video textures, which are used in several of the Pro Skater environments to project music and skating videos on walls and billboards.

Pro Skater's environments are solid and believable, if not particularly interactive. The best part about the game is that everything can and should be skated on. Tables, curbs, railings, ramps, escalators, traffic signals, billboards – if you can see it, you can most likely skate across, over or underneath it. Neversoft has added some breakable objects to their worlds, including plate glass windows, boxes, signs and, in an altogether cool moment, the













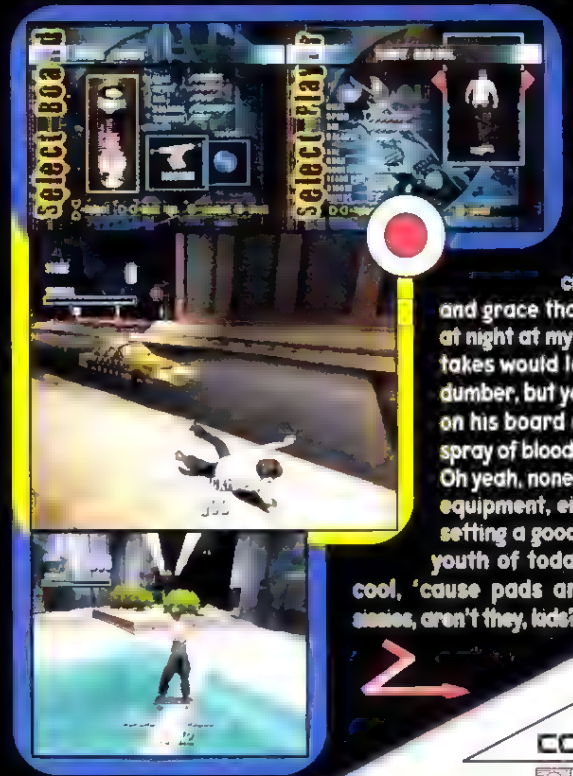


backstop of a basketball hoop. Now, if only you could hang from the rim...

The gameplay is incredible. The stunts are so over-the-top and physically impossible that I found myself laughing like a mental patient every time I executed and landed a series of insane tricks. Not only does the gameplay mechanic of Pro Skater thumb its nose at the Laws of Physics, but it knocks over the concept of gravity and grinds across its face. Is the game realistic? No. Do we want it to be? No. Asky Dave watched me play for a while and complained; "It's like you've got a jetpack attached to your skateboard." To which I replied; "Yeah. Ain't it cool?"

I found early on that, although the Dual Shock compatibility is quite nice, nothing beats the shear on/off precision of the plain old digital pad while punching out huge moves. The analog controllers are a bit mushy in comparison, but there is a huge trade-off for playing with the d-pad. The single worst element of the PlayStation controller, the uncomfortably hard d-pad, with its stupidly separated directional buttons, causes massive damage to your thumbs in marathon skating sessions. Since the secret to Pro Skater is to grab big air and then begin rotating the d-pad like a nut, you're constantly mashing your thumb across the d-pad. After the first solid day of playing, my left thumb was swollen and sore, which caused tasers of pain to shoot up my hand whenever I used it. Even so, I found myself playing again the next day, gritting through the pain and still loving the game.

Skating has always been tied closely to the punk/alternative scene, which has been captured smartly in the selection of tunes. Bay Area alt-heroes Primus weigh in with one of their finest, "Jerry Was A Race Car Driver," Goldfinger contribute some of their Warped Tour mall ska, while the Dead Kennedys (old school San Fran punk) toss out the oldie-but-goody "Police Truck." There are a few more tracks from bands like Even Rude, Suicidal Tendencies, Speedealer, Suicide Machines, The Ernies and Unsane. While the punk-fest is coolio, you're going to hear these same songs repeated over and over as you play the game, so don't be surprised to find yourself whistling a jaunty ska-punk song a few hours after playing. Hands down, one of the best lyrics in quite some time comes from The Vandals song "Euro-Barge," which contains the line: "I am the ambassador/Of kick-your-ass-idor." Poetry, thy name is punk.



This game should come with a big "Kids, Don't Try This At Home" sticker attached to it. Not only is the gameplay itself on the hairy side, but the disc has a few street skating videos stuck away in the options menu, including cinematics of each of the skaters. Wiping out is brushed off with a speed and grace that I know I lacked when I was but a young lad eating pavement at night at my local junior high school. Some of the falls your character takes would leave a real human hospitalized or forty IQ points dumber, but your polygonal deckmeister will merely hop back on his board and continue on his way, even if a huge spray of blood has just fountained out of his head. Oh yeah, none of these skaters wear safety equipment, either, which isn't really setting a good example for the youth of today. Which is cool, 'cause pads are for sissies, aren't they, kids?

BOTTOM LINE

It is absolutely impossible to say enough good things about Tony Hawk Pro Skater. I haven't even gotten into the way-b tchin' two player mode, which s worth purchasing the game on its own if you have roommates or siblings. Pro Skater packages all the elements of skateboarding — rebellion daredevil stunts petty crimes and punk rock — into one amazing game. You will still be playing Pro Skater months from now, of that I promise. Neversoft should be lauded for producing such an extraordinary game, while Activision should be commended for having the cojones to release this game in all its unsafe, but oh-so-much-fun Lawn Dart glory. I've been driving the rest of the staff crazy, saving excellent runs and then making everyone come to my desk to watch the replays.

SCORE:

99%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

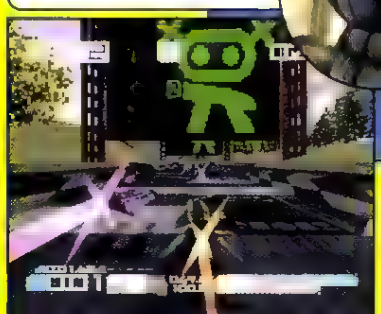
WIPEOUT 3

GENRE:	Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	Psygnosis
DEVELOPED BY:	Designer's Republic
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

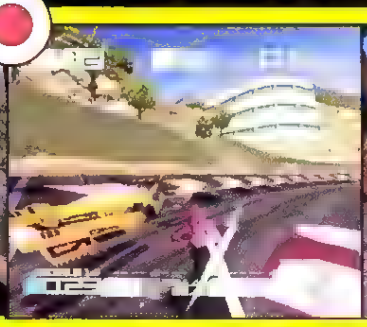


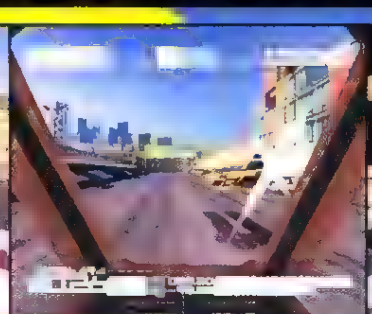


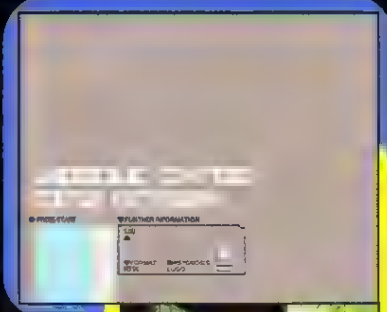














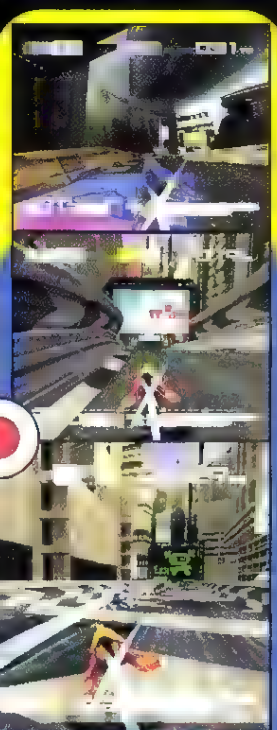
For every rule of thumb, there is always an exception. Wipeout is the exception to the rule; "sequels always suck."

The original Wipeout was undeniably good, but it wasn't perfect. Wipeout XL (or 2097 for you import loving gamers) improved the gameplay, updated the look and introduced America to the name Red Bull. Wipeout 64, although not a PSX game, was more of a Wipeout v2.5 than a true sequel. It introduced some cool ideas to the Wipeout universe, such as the different competition modes and four-player racing, but a few items were implemented poorly, such as the "god" weapons and the low framerate in the aforementioned four-player mode.

Wipeout 3 draws all of the positives and none of the negatives from the previous games. Once again featuring a new look – courtesy of the Designer's Republic – Wipeout 3 has all new tracks, new ship designs, new weapons and a smarter AI, all while keeping the proper feel of the series. The instant you pick up the controller, you know this is a Wipeout game.

The biggest change to the series is the Dual Shock support. Previous games supported analog control on the PSX via the neGcon controller, but because the neGcon never gained the mass-market penetration it deserved, most gamers have been stuck playing Wipeout in digital mode. Once you've tried analog control, you'll never want to go back. By combing the analog stick with the airbrakes, it is possible to slide through some insane turns in the game. In fact, there is more than one track where power sliding is pretty much required if you expect to finish in one piece.

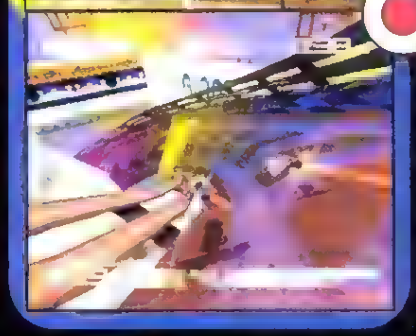
Another major improvement to Wipeout 3 is the skill level of the computer opponents. In previous Wipeout titles, the computer opponents were fairly dumb. Wipeout 64 introduced "smart" opponents and they have been kept for Wipeout 3. The AI players in the game are cutthroat. They don't gain any magical abilities, but they do know how to race. Even in the early levels, you will have to play well in order to place first. It is not uncommon to see the AI players attacking one another and vying for position. It is also not uncommon for an AI player to blast you with a missile as they zoom by. Use of the shield power-up was more or less optional in Wipeout XL. In Wipeout 3, the shield is necessary as a defensive weapon.

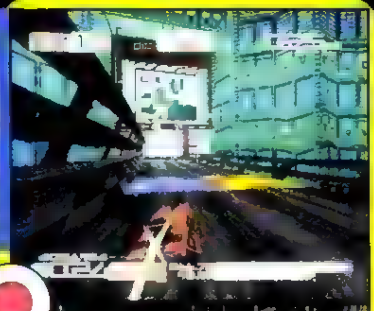


Other weapons in the game include a revamped quake (which has one of the best sound effects in the game), a force wall that will stop an opponent cold, and an energy drain that will restore your energy at the expense of an opponent. In all, there are 12 different weapons to use.

In addition to the new weapons, players now have the ability to turbo boost at any time, so long as you still have an energy reserve. Once







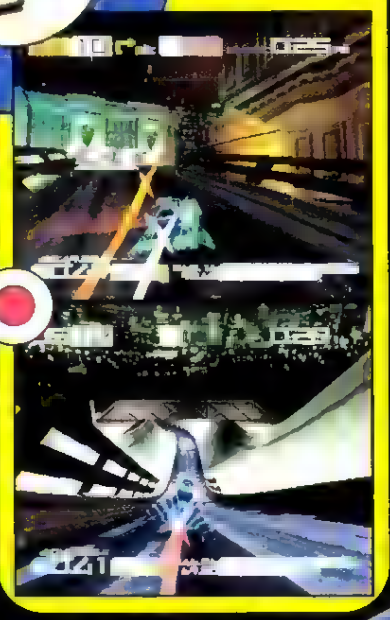


your energy level drops to around 20 percent you will not be able to use turbo any longer, but at that point your ship is a prime target for enemy weapons. Now, throw in the fact that pit stops are no longer long enough to completely restore your energy level and another element of strategy has been added to the game. A turbo boost may shoot you ahead, but it will also weaken your ship.

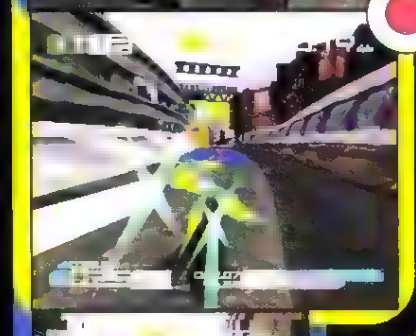
Music has always been an important part of the Wipeout series, and in Wipeout 3 the UK's DJ Sasha has taken the helm. A mixture of original compositions by Sasha and licensed music by artists such as Orbital, Propellerheads, MKL and Paul Van Dyk, the soundtrack is an excellent example of European techno with a slight ambient influence. Although the songs are produced by different artists, they all flow together as if produced by one group. There has been no official word, but rumor has it that a soundtrack CD (similar to the one released for Wipeout XL) is in the works.

There are a total of eight new tracks in Wipeout 3. The tracks vary from easy to incredibly difficult, but the learning curve is soft enough that even a beginning player can pick up a controller and jump into a race. Mastering the game though is incredibly difficult. The genius of the track design becomes apparent when you realize that you've just wasted three hours attempting to shave two seconds off of a lap time.

The single player game is kept interesting with the inclusion of various racing modes. The expected single track races are here, as well as time trial, challenge, eliminator and tournament modes. The challenge modes are similar to those found in Wipeout 64. Taken one track at a time, the challenges are not necessarily about finishing first. Challenge mode alone can add hours to the game. Eliminator mode is all about taking out the other racers while keeping yourself alive, and tournament mode is the classic "race through everything" option that is a Wipeout tradition.









Multiplayer competition is provided for via a two-player split screen. You have the option of splitting horizontally or vertically. The game even has a perspective correction mode for playing on a widescreen TV - yes, one of those insanely expensive, but good looking sets. If you have a widescreen TV, you now have a game that can use it. A four-player mode is also available (unofficially) if you have a link cable and a second PlayStation around. It isn't the easiest thing to setup, but if you have the space, and the equipment, four-player racing can easily consume the better part of a weekend. You'll need to enter a code to enable the four-player mode. Check the EXecute section for details.

Wipeout 3's only weak point is a tendency to slow down slightly in certain areas (such as the Mega Mall entrance). Even this isn't necessarily a bad thing though, because when you're moving at full throttle a little slowdown on a sharp corner can actually be an asset.

BOTTOM LINE

When all is said and done, Wipeout 3 is one hell of a game. As developers move their resources from the PSX to the PS2, we can only hope and pray that Wipeout 4 is in the mix somewhere. In the meantime, Wipeout 3 is here. It doesn't get any better than this.

SCORE:

98%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

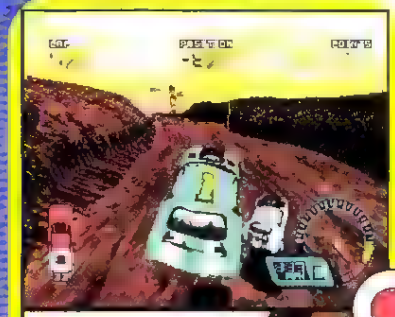
Analog Control Compatible

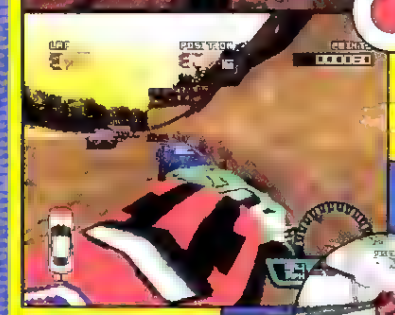
Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

DEMOLITION RACER

GENRE:	Combat Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	Accolade/Pitbull
ORIGIN:	USA/UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

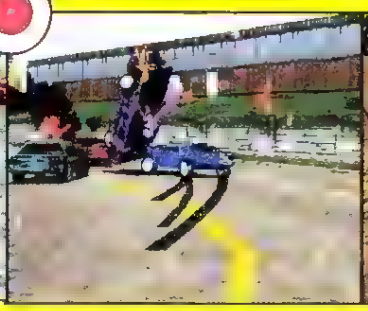




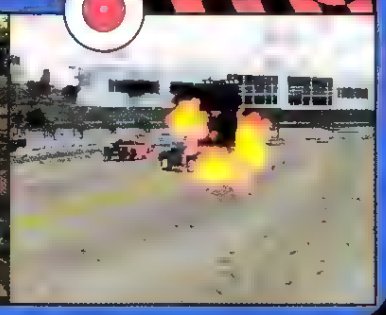




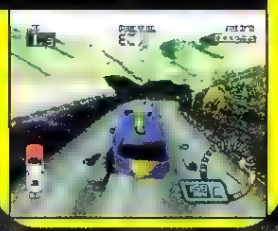


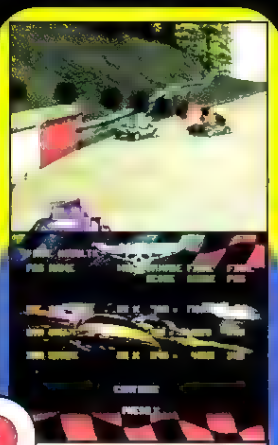










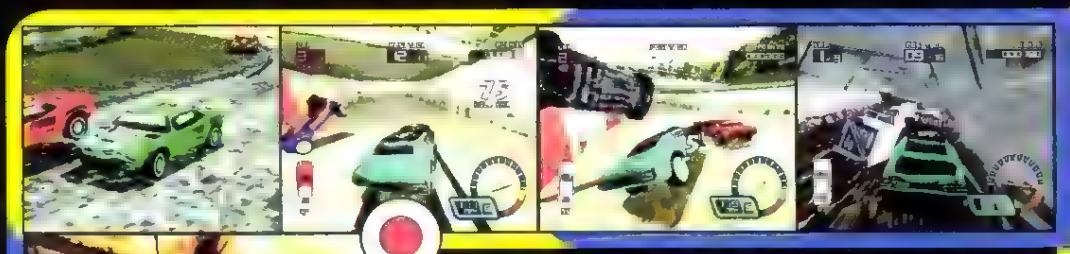


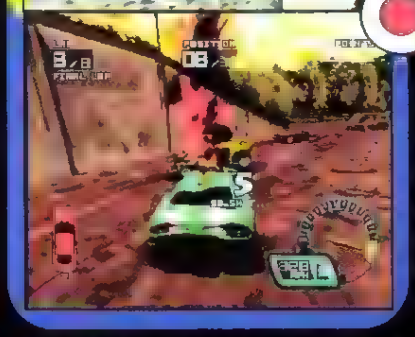
If you have had your PlayStation for any amount of time (ie., 3-4 years), then you are probably aware of the Destruction Derby (DD) series of games from Psygnosis. DD1 was one of the first games that made you say, "Wow, the PlayStation really is a powerful machine", and DD2 was such a wonderful game that it still ranks in my personal Top 10 of PSX games. Well, there hasn't been a new DD game in three years (although DD3 is planned for release sometime next Spring), and when I heard that Accolade (now Infogrames) was working on a similar title, I was all-a-flutter — and a bit skeptical. After all, if their new game wasn't EXACTLY like my old favorite, well, then there would be "heck" to pay come review time.

I guess I've been converted, then, because Demolition Racer is not exactly like Destruction Derby 2, but it is a fine example of how to take a good idea (how could smashing cars NOT be a good idea?) and expound upon it.

Demolition Racer uses a modified Test Drive 5 engine, so you may recognize the game right away, as it has the "look" of a Pitbull game. However, the modification comes into play when you start to talk about framerate. Despite the fact that there are 16 cars at the start of each race, DR absolutely screams! It's so fast, you'll be amazed that you actually have any control over your car whatsoever. And the control is tight! You can powerslide through curves, line yourself up for the big hit, then hit the gas and ram the crud out of the guy in front of you, for a nice 50-point award.

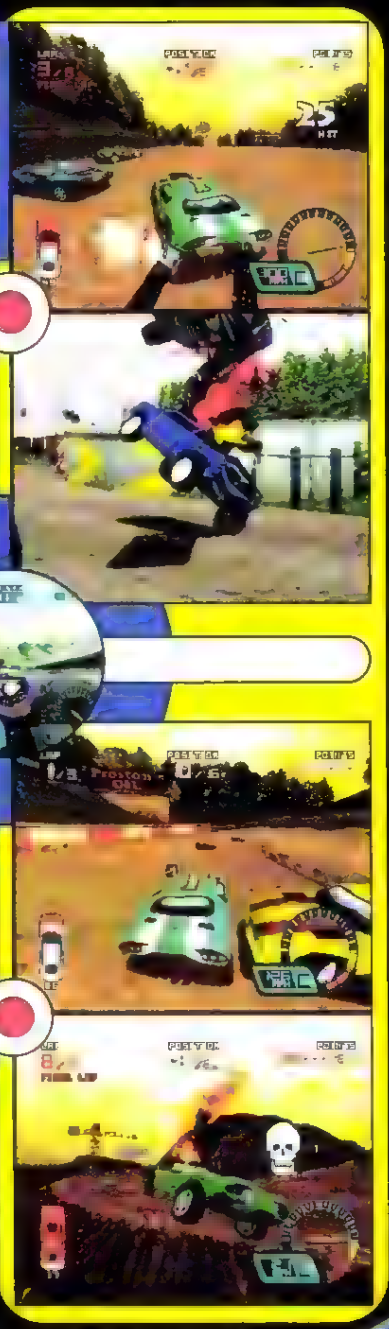
The point system employed with Demolition Racer is a nice addition to this type of game; as with the DD series, you never had quite a grasp of how you were racking up the points. With DR, after each collision, you'll see the number of points you received along with a little text below that says something like "start fire" (worth 60 points). Basically, you get 5 to 50 points for a hit, depending on how much faster you're going than the car you smack. Hit a car thats going the same speed you are, and you'll get 5, while if you're going full throttle, and whack a guy that's out for a Sunday drive, then you'll receive 50, plus additional points for spinning it or knocking it into a wall. In Demolition mode, the goal is to finish as high as you can in the race while obtaining as many hit points as possible. Your



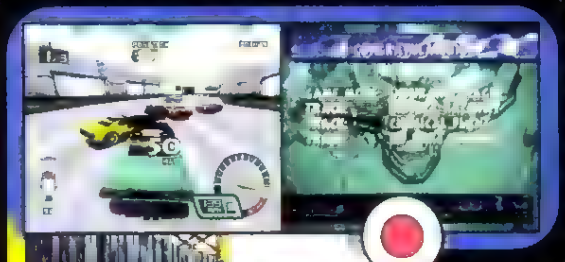


race position is basically a multiplier (1st place is 25, 2nd is 22, and so on) that determines your overall score. For instance, finish 1st in the race while accumulating 1000 points, and you'll end up with an overall score of 25,000. However, you may not be the overall winner because the guy who finished 3rd (20-point multiplier) finished with 1500 hit points, and thus had an overall score of 30,000. Since every race is random, you may score 10,000 points one race and come in 5th place, while the very next race you'll only score 5,500 points and you'll come in 1st place overall.

Also, while you are causing all of this destruction and mayhem, your car is taking on damage, and will suffer damage with each hit you take AND dish out. The cars all show multiple levels of damage as they get hit, and eventually they'll explode into a fiery ball when you're time is up!



There are many types of gameplay modes in Demolition Racer, including Chicken, Suicide, Demolition, Chase, & Last Man Standing. There are ten different tracks and a half-a-dozen different "bowls" to check out, and eight cars to select (although most are locked, and will have to be earned in order to open them up). Some of the tracks are perfectly designed for this type of racing, as you can take the right line to position yourself for the big kill! There are also plenty of alternate routes that usually hold a power up or two. You can find bonus boxes that hold either Health, Points, limited Invulnerability, or Damage. The computer is no dummy, though, so don't think that those boxes will be around the next time you pass by — better get them on the first lap, or you can bet that one of the 15 computer dudes will!







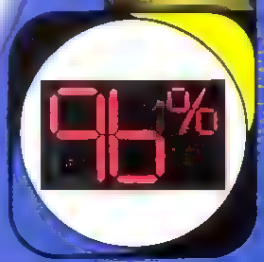
My favorite part of Destruction Derby 2 is losing three of your four tires, yet still being able to limp along and cause some damage to the other cars. Or, you've only got your two right side tires, and can only go in circles, yet you can still cause some grief! Unfortunately, that play mechanic has not been included in DR. While I understand the reason (it's still a race, after all), it would have been nice to have employed it in one the the other gameplay modes (like the Bowl League). Also, when selecting your car before the race , you'll notice that all of the other cars in the race have the exact same car you do, albeit they have different paint jobs. Some may complain about this, but it doesn't make any difference to me. First of all, you'll be going so fast, you won't have time to notice, and secondly, the cars will all have different shapes and looks because of the the damage they have sustained.

BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line is that Demolition Racer is a fantastic game, and one that I can't seem to stop playing! The course designs are perfect for this type of game, the music is wonderful (apparently I'm starting to grow fond of Fear Factory and Junkie XL), and the number of different gameplay modes make Demolition Racer a game I'll be playing for a long, long time to come. Consider me a convert, and a skeptic no more!

SCORE:





COMPATIBILITY



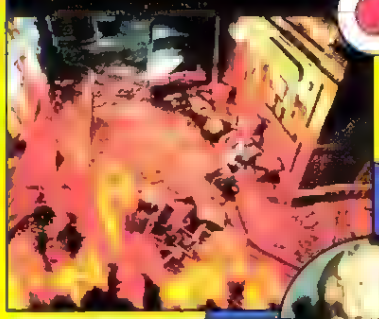
REVIEWED BY:
CHRIS KRAMER

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

GENRE:	Survival Horror
PUBLISHED BY:	Capcom
DEVELOPED BY:	Capcom
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



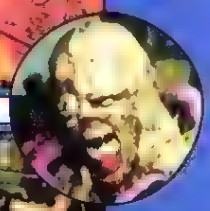






When Greg asked me to review this game, he did so almost apologetically, because he knows how much I put in playing the first game in the series over and over again. But all the time I spent on the first game has given me a unique insight to the series in all its forms, from play mechanics to backstory. While Resident Evil 3: Nemesis is definitely more of the same, Capcom has made a few changes and additions to make the gameplay stand out enough to make long-time fans happy. I wish that the Dino Crisis 3D enhancements had been added, but perhaps it was felt that RE fans would not be happy with the subtraction of the beautifully detailed 2D backgrounds for which the series is known.

This game was originally referred to by Capcom as "Resident Evil 2 1/2," since it's not quite a true sequel. In fact, when we first heard about it, it was still being called Resident Evil: Nemesis; it took a while for someone in the marketing department, either here or in Japan, to realize that they could sell a trillion more copies if it was clearly a sequel. Hence the addition of the number "3" to the title.



In normal Capcom fashion, Nemesis isn't actually a separate game in terms of the story arc. Instead, it exists in two moments in time: immediately before the events of Resident Evil 2 (with Jill as the main character) and, in the second half, immediately afterwards (where you switch to Carlos, a mercenary in Umbrella's employ). Instead of branching out with a new story, Shinji Mikami and crew have come up with what could best be described as an interlude or side-story.



Nemesis begins with Jill Valentine, the heroine of the first Resident Evil. Jill has recovered from the events of the first game and is planning on getting out of town and away from STARS, when everything once again goes straight to hell. Her first order of business is to try to hook up with any remaining STARS members, so she heads off to the Raccoon City Police Department to look for her teammates. Unfortunately, the only thing waiting for her there is the Nemesis him(it?)self.

Just what is this huge, sutured and surly creature and why does it have such a passionate dislike for STARS members? The only word the creature can force through its misshapen lips is "STARS!," which is uttered with a scary vehemence that indicates it has a bone to pick with Raccoon's defenders. The Nemesis is nothing if not single-minded. Once he pops up, he's on your tail, forcing you to worry about a lot more than the occasional zombie, devil dog, or mutant critter. After all, zombies only nibble on you. Nemesis, if you're out of his immediate throttling-and-poking range (which is a good idea, believe me), will fire a rocket at you. Which is really not cool.

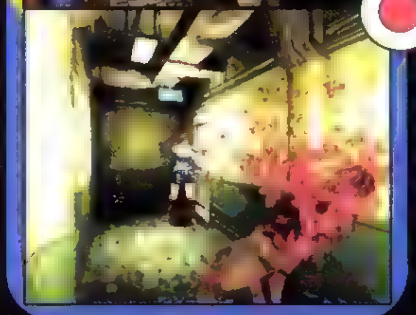


The Nemesis is the most unique part of this new game and is used effectively throughout. One comes away from the game with the feeling that he really doesn't like you and wants you definitely, ultimately, spectacularly dead. You'll be cursing the monster as it appears at extremely inopportune moments, smashing through doors, jumping through windows or, even more creepy, suddenly standing right behind you. Unlike the brainless zombies, you can't shake him by simply running into another room. He will follow you, making it even more





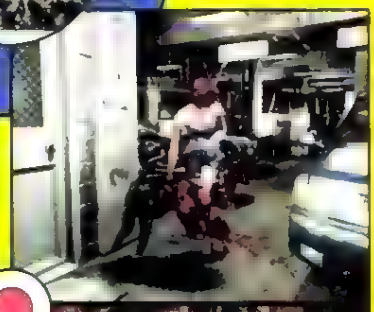














difficult to navigate narrow passages and evade the already large amount of other "normal" monsters already roaming the streets and alleyways of Raccoon City. And, if you're running from him down a long hallway, make sure to zigzag; moving in a straight line will earn you a rocket to the back of the head.

RE3: Nemesis doesn't have nearly as many changes to the engine and game structure as Dino Crisis does, but there is a good sprinkling of fresh bits and pieces that are obvious reactions to gamers' feedback from the previous games. First off, as Capcom has been promising, the zombies are much faster and more unpredictable. They lurch after you with surprising speed, pop around corners suddenly, follow you down stairs and into connecting rooms, and clutch at you as you attempt to sprint by them. It's much harder to simply run past, since they're not the plodding, dopey monsters we remember. There also happens to be a full-on army of the walking dead, instead of merely one or two per room. In one instance, I was out of ammo and ran up a fire escape, hoping to reset the AI and make the zombies "forget" I was there. No such luck. When I came back down, not only had they not forgotten, but five more of their pals had shown up to the party and the entire group was collected around my only way down, waiting to do the Zombie Boogie on my face.

The overall pace of the game is much different as well. I don't think RE3 even belongs in the "survival horror" category, as the emphasis is much more on action. You're on the run from the first moments of the game. The idea of the original was that you were low on ammo, surrounded by inexplicable mysteries and trapped in a haunted house, trying to figure out what was going on without becoming an appetizer. Now that the cat's been let out of the bag, we all know what's up with Umbrella, the T-Virus and all those pesky mutants, it's a lot less spooky. To make up for the lack of surprise, Capcom's flooded the game with a huge amount of angry, brain-sucking, recently deceased Raccoon City citizens.

Not only is Jill still the Master of Unlocking, but she has now become the Master of the Broken Tackle. Her new move is a shoulder-smack that can bounce zombies back a few steps, giving you breathing room to open that door you're desperately trying to reach or to get some space to open up with a big weapon. Spend a lot of time learning how to use the dodge and shove moves, though, as they'll save you a lot and ammo and green herbs. One word of advice, however: don't try this move on the Nemesis.







Like the last game, Capcom has stocked Raccoon City with all sorts of impressive ordinance, from submachine guns to M16s, grenade launchers to flame throwers, large caliber handguns to even larger-bore shotguns. All the weaponry has even been licensed or approved by the manufacturers, because each firearm is now an exacting representation of the real thing. Capcom even has a deal in Japan with Tokyo Marui, an airsoft gun company, to produce replica Resident Evil BB guns.

Is it me, or does this game have an oddly disjointed beginning? Jill goes from having Deep Thoughts on her bed to being blasted into the street. From there, you run through a door, where she engages in a conversation with a big fat coward who moans about his daughter and then locks himself in a big-rig trailer. The weirdest part is Jill's dialogue. She begins talking to the dude about escaping, without introducing herself or taking part in normal everyday conversational rituals. Did Capcom cut something? Was there a scene left out? Also, can someone please explain why Carlos looks like a cool mercenary, but Jill looks like she's ready to step out for a night on the town? Exactly what was Jill going to do with herself professionally now that she was leaving STARS?

BOTTOM LINE

While I was personally left feeling a bit indifferent the third time around, I can still recognize that the huge fanbase that Capcom has earned will be more than happy with this game. There are many more branching points to the story which effect the immediate flow of the game, as well as your ending (of which there are three). Random elements reward you for trying different things and the game is much, much larger than any of the previous titles. The inclusion of the Nemesis makes you feel like you're the one being hunted for once, and is unique enough to give a whole new spin to the game. If you don't mind a little blood and violence — OK, a lot of blood and violence — make it a priority to pick this baby up.

SCORE

98%

COMPATIBILITY

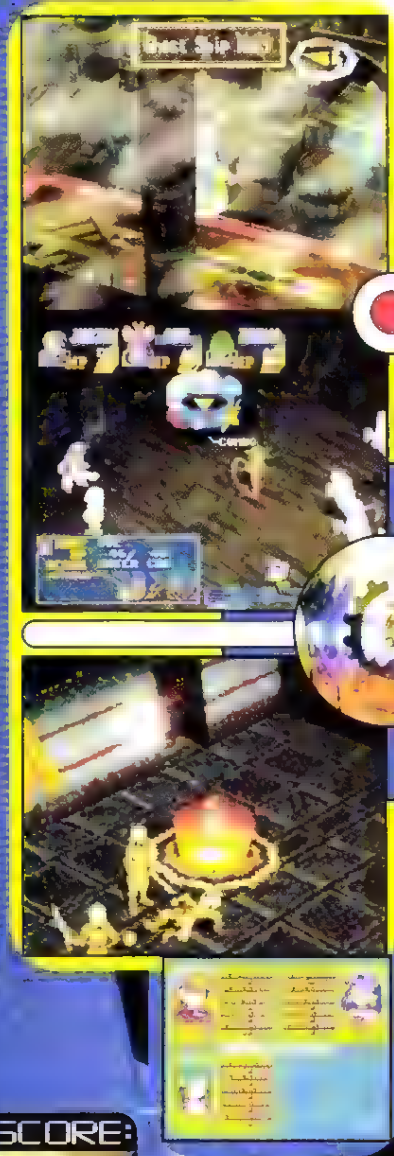
1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

GRANDIA

GENRE:	RPG
PUBLISHED BY:	SCEA
DEVELOPED BY:	Game Arts
ORIGIN:	US
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Every so often a game receives "legendary" status for spending years in development. Many times the result is a complete POS, but every once in awhile something good comes of the whole experience. Grandia falls into the latter category.

Grandia was originally programmed by Game Arts, the Japanese development company best known for the Lunar series. First released in Japan many moons ago, the game appeared on the Sega Saturn. Originally the game was supposed to be released domestically for the Saturn, but the console's demise kind of killed that option. Other rumors indicated that Working Designs was considering the title, but those plans never worked out. Finally, after years of delay, Sony Computer Entertainment America picked up the title and announced it was coming to the PlayStation. Thankfully the game is worth the wait.

The story follows the adventures of a young boy by the name of Justin. Justin, like any other young boy living in a fantasy world, has decided to become an adventurer. Although his beginnings are rather pathetic (he believes that a dirty apron is the "legendary armor"), Justin soon learns the way of the warrior and becomes quite the buff kid.

Visually, because the game is so old, the graphics look a bit dated, but nothing terrible. Everything has an anime style design, which works well with the simplistic graphics. When you consider the actual age of the game (Grandia was first released for the Saturn back in 1997), it is surprising how well the game stands the test of time.

Like most Game Arts games, the presentation in Grandia is wonderful. At the time of review we didn't have final packaging, so there's no word on any extras (if any), but the game itself is nicely done. Grandia begins with a nice movie style intro that segues seamlessly into the actual gameplay.

One disappointing aspect is the lack of voice acting throughout. The major sections of gameplay have some really nice voice acting, but the majority of the conversations are simply text on the screen. It would have been much nicer if the full game had been voiced, or not at all. As it is, the game begins with a voiced section and then switches to basic text. A bit of a letdown, unfortunately.



The world of Grandia is rendered in 3D but, unlike the worlds of Final Fantasy VII and VIII, everything is rendered on the fly. This means you can move the camera around as you see fit. This is a nice touch because it allows the environment to be truly interactive. Sometimes an item you need will be behind a building. In the Final Fantasy games, you would have to hope you knew an item was hidden. In Grandia, you simply move the camera to look around an obstacle.



As a text heavy role-playing game, a lot of the game relies on the translation work. For the most part, the translation is great. The reviewable beta I looked at had a few minor issues with the translation, but nothing major enough to detract from the game. Like other role playing games, talking to people and adventuring around is the name of the game. Grandia strikes a nice balance between keeping you on-track for a mission and allowing you to adventure around and explore the world.



Despite the age of the title, Sony has kept it current by including Dual Shock support. It is entirely possible to play the game with a generic digital pad, but the Dual Shock support is a nice touch. It is something that gamers have come to expect, and it does add to the game.

Musically, the soundtrack to Grandia is decent, but not overwhelmingly exceptional. None of the compositions really stand out, but by the same token, none of them really get on your nerves either. The soundtrack simply does the job.

SCORE:



94%

BOTTOM LINE

As role-playing games gain popularity here in the States, it is nice to see that game companies are bringing over some of the better titles from Japan. Now, if they could only release them in a timely fashion, the situation would be wonderful. Fans of the Lunar series, and the role-playing genre in general, will absolutely love this game. Everyone else should find it quite enjoyable.

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Fishing
PUBLISHED BY:	Agetec
DEVELOPED BY:	ASCII Corp.
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
ALEX ANDREWS

BASS LANDING

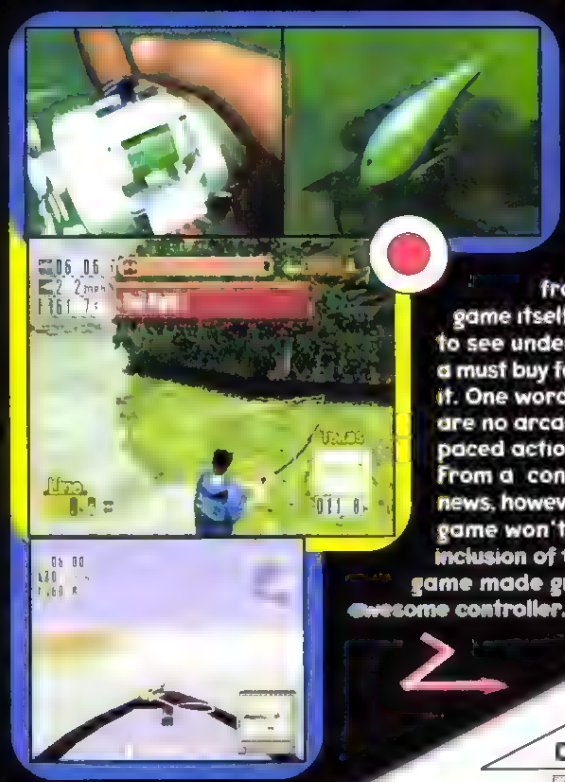
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

I tell you, in the last six months it seems as though there have been more fishing games either announced or released than any other genre of game. I may be exaggerating just a tad but, good grief, how many fishing games can one console support? Don't get me wrong, I love 'em and have played them all, but I think we've just about caught every freakn' bass in the water. However, just when you think you've had your fill, Agetec changes the rules. Bass Landing is a little different than the rest of the pack, if for no other reason than the fact that it comes with an analog fishing controller that you actually cast and reel with. I remember when I first saw this game and controller over a year ago, I didn't think it would ever make it to the States. Low and behold, here it is and fishing will never be the same.

Let's face it, the big news here is the controller, but allow me to talk a little about the game first. Like just about every other bass fishing game, the main gameplay element is set up around a tournament on a variety of different lakes. In this case, there are five. There are 14 different species of fish to contend with and over 50 different kinds of rods, reels and lures in your "E" tackle box. The first thing you'll notice about the gameplay is the only underwater view you'll get is a replay of a successful catch. The focus of Bass Landing is a true simulation – after all, you don't get to see underwater in real life now, do you! You get all of the state-of-the-art equipment though, a fish finder, electric motor, cast meter, etc. You control just about every aspect of the action except the clock, of course. You also receive some "hints" before the start of each tournament to clue you in on the day's conditions. The real key to success, however, is the tutorial. This is a must if you expect to catch anything worth keeping. It takes you through all aspects of the game with a rather comical instructor. Being the impetuous gamer that I am, I started fishing right away and blew off the tutorial, then wondered why I wasn't catching anything. Needless to say, don't blow it off. Bass Landing truly comes to life, however, when you hook a fish and start fighting the bugger with that awesome controller.



It's almost impossible to describe the feeling when you're fighting a virtual fish with this controller. It truly is the next best thing to being there. I had to put the game on pause more than once to get another beer. It made the experience complete! It's set up for right-handed gamers but, as a lefty, I had no trouble. You can cast with it, reel in and control all aspects of the game. The shoulder and control buttons are all on the face, as well as the start and select buttons. The analog control is in the middle. Everything fits well together, causing little to no fatigue.



After spending more than a week with this game, I can't imagine ever wanting to play another fishing game without this kind of controller. It has totally changed the experience from somewhat passive to total immersion. The game itself is a little better than average and the inability to see underwater does detract, but the total package is a must buy for fans of fishing games. You just can't be without it. One word of caution, however, and that is that there are no arcade elements here, so don't expect fast-paced action. You'll be sitting there for awhile. From a consumer's standpoint, the best news, however, is that the price of the game won't be affected by the inclusion of the reel. A good game made great by an awesome controller.

BOTTOM LINE

The bottom line? Easy; between the action offered by the controller, the gameplay, and the price, Bass Landing is a must-purchase for the, highly sought after, fan of the fishing genre. Unless your favorite rental place will rent the controller with the game, renting is a waste. If you like fishing, buy it. You'll be glad you did.

SCORE:

87%

COMPATIBILITY

1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

RE-VOLT

GENRE:	Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	Acclaim
DEVELOPED BY:	Acclaim Studios London
ORIGIN	UK
# OF CD'S	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!









TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Re-Volt is an excellent game — if you're playing it on a 3D accelerated PC. Unfortunately the PlayStation version is nowhere near as good. In fact, it is pretty darn bad.

Re-Volt is a racing game, but instead of full size cars, you race radio-controlled models. Instead of racing on full size tracks, you race through environments such as a local neighborhood, a supermarket or a museum. Because a typical radio-controlled car is only about a foot long, locations, which would normally be quite boring, actually become quite exciting.

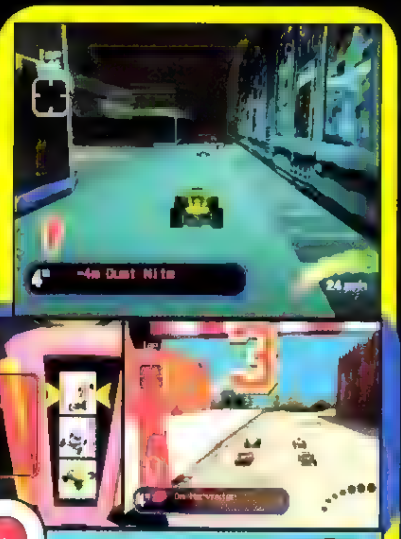
For the most part, the level design is good. The developers have done a great job of using everyday items to create the courses. The first level, for example, has you jumping off curbs, driving underneath a parked car and racing through an empty drainage pipe. This is exactly the sort of stuff we raced around when we were younger.

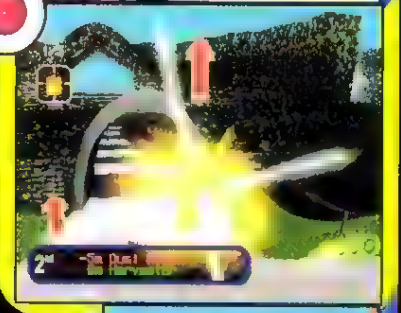
In order to spice up the gameplay a bit, Re-Volt adds weapons to the mix. Borrowing a page from Mario Kart in this regard, the weapons run the gamut from oil slicks and bottle rockets to an electrical burst that will stop any nearby vehicle. Other interesting items include a bomb, which must be passed off to an opponent before it explodes, and a battery, which serves as a turbo boost. The only thing missing here is a "weapon drop" option. At times you may end up with an item you don't want. Unfortunately the only way to get rid of a weapon (and pick up a new one) is to actually use the one you currently have.

On the surface Re-Volt sounds like a lot of fun, but the PlayStation hardware combined with shoddy programming makes this game almost unplayable. A number of minor problems destroy what otherwise could have been an excellent title.

The most noticeable problem with Re-Volt is the incredibly jumpy control. It is nearly impossible to make minor steering corrections. Even when using the analog sticks on a Dual Shock your car will jump around more than a grasshopper. The touchy control means that precision driving is all for naught. Players are more likely to feel frustrated, rather than challenged, when playing this game.

Another problem with the game is the horrible frame rate. In a racing game everything needs to be moving along smoothly. In Re-Volt it is quite obvious the game engine is having trouble pushing the necessary amount of polygons because certain areas are extremely choppy. This ruins any illusion of speed. The game also suffers from graphical glitches such as pop-up and improper perspective, not to mention annoyingly long load times.







Like most other racing games, Re-Volt uses techno-style background music during the races. Only problem is, it isn't very good techno music. The soundtrack is fairly bland and after a few hours of playing the music all sounds the same. Thankfully there is an option to turn off the in-game music.

On the upside Re-Volt does have pretty much everything you'd expect from a racing game. Single level races, championship racing, head to head racing, hidden cars and locked tracks are all here. There is even a level editor, which allows you to create your own tracks.

The level editor is basic, but it works. Most players should have the basics of level creation down within an hour or so. Custom levels can be saved to a memory card and traded with friends. This is almost reason enough to consider the game — almost.

SCORE:



71%

BOTTOM LINE

Re-Volt is a game that probably should not have been released just yet. The game still needs quite a bit of work. The PlayStation version just can't compete with titles such as Wipeout 3 and Crash Team Racing. The included level editor is really the only positive thing about this game. Rent if you must, but whatever you do, don't actually buy the PlayStation version of this game. Get the PC version instead. It is much, much better.

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	Accolade
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

EXrated

TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD 3

EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Hard to believe we're on the third installment of this series! The original game was decent, but suffered from slippery control and lackluster graphics. The sequel looked much better but, as it utilized the Test Drive 4 engine, it didn't quite "feel" like an off-road game. Not only did it offer fewer courses, but it also suffered from the same slippery control.

At first glance, TD: Off Road 3 looks like it has combined the best features of the prior games. There are a total of eleven varied tracks which can be raced during the day or night and forwards or backwards (the tracks go backwards, not the trucks). While most of the courses are still checkpoint-based, there are some circuit courses as well. There are also more than 25 different vehicles to drive, ranging from Nissan Pathfinders to military Hummers.

Aside from the Arcade and two-player split-screen mode there is a World Tour containing three different divisions and a Championship where you can test your skill against increasingly difficult computer opponents. Finishing these divisions opens up new tracks and trucks for the Arcade mode and also earns money for purchasing better vehicles and upgrades such as tires, engines, and suspension systems.

After the race is finished, you can watch a Gran Turismo-style replay with some cool camera angles of the action. There are also 10 musical tracks to choose from by "alternative rock" artists such as Blink 182 and Incubus.

Graphically, TD:OR3 is fairly impressive. Although there are some clipping problems, most notably in the Yucatan course, each track features a wide variety of obstacles and scenery. No more boring rocks and dirt — instead there are railroad cars, redwood trees, pyramids, dry creek beds, bridges, bayou swamps, and even the snow-covered streets of New York! There are some seriously steep hills to climb and lots of places to get airborne. Some of the courses are a little bit too dark and detailed, however, making it difficult to see where you are going. But I guess that is part of the thrill of off-roading.



Despite all of these excellent features, the game still has one annoying problem — it is very difficult. It's not just that the computer opponents are hard to beat, which they are, but your vehicle is tough to control. I didn't expect the vehicles to stick to the "road," since the game is supposed to be an off-road racer. However, I also didn't expect to constantly fight to keep control of my truck. The slightest turn made my rear wheels spin out, small jumps made me bounce all over the place, and it was quite easy to get bogged down in the mud or stuck in a corner. Although each vehicle had different characteristics, none of them drove as tightly as I wanted them too.



TD:OR3 has an interesting play mechanic — the game recommends pumping the "X" button for power bursts when climbing hills or going through the mud. I found that if you pump the power button during the entire race you will have much better control than if you simply hold down the accelerator. The downside is that few players are going to want to pump the acceleration button continuously. A less important criticism concerns the on-screen map. Because the courses have so many alternative routes, the map is practically worthless. The fact that it is upside-down makes it totally worthless.

If the control was a little tighter, the game would definitely be a winner. As it is, TD:OR3 is a very good game, but the frustration level is a little too high.

BOTTOM LINE

This is the best PlayStation off-road game yet, with excellent course variety and designs as well as lots of gameplay options. Unfortunately, the control is still too slippery and the computer opponents are quite difficult to beat.

SCORE:



84%

COMPATIBILITY

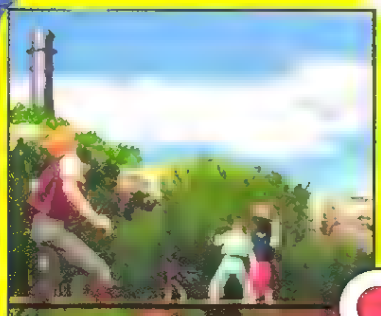
1 or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY: DILLION MERZ

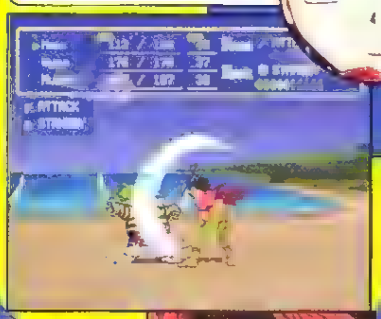
THOUSAND ARMS

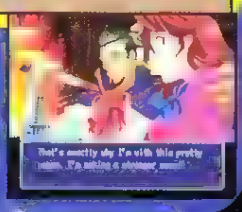
GENRE:	RPG
PUBLISHED BY:	Atlus
DEVELOPED BY:	Atlus
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CD'S	2
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB









Hasn't it been long enough for male role-playing gamers? Now, in unison, say "Yes, we agree!" Finally, Thousand Arms gives us PlayStation owners the chance to pick up on virtual women and save the world. Sure, the girls may be young, but it's still legal in the kingdom of Traddgard.

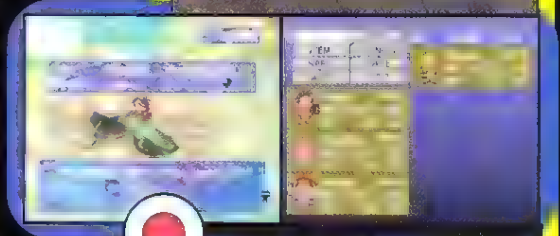
Filling the shoes of Meis Triumph, you start off as a young blacksmith with little hope; No weapon, no future, no home, and most sadly, no dating prospects. The evil empire has attacked your home and, having escaped, you start out on your quest for revenge, only to end up saving the world. Where Thousand Arms separates itself from the competition is in how Meis and his party evolve.

Passing through towns, Meis meets up with a strange lot of characters, ranging from disheveled children to unfaithful wives. Regardless, Meis is always trying for the big score with pickup lines galore. As the party grows, Romeo here gets the opportunity to date any of the fine-looking women in his group. In doing so, their intimacy levels grow, and, in turn, Meis is able to forge stronger, more powerful weapons with an elemental-based power-up associated with the dame.

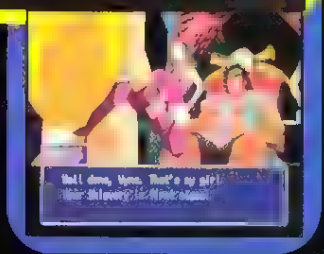
Thousand Arms sports a unique fighting system in which the front character is the sole attacker, while the other two party members hang behind and provide support (the same goes for the enemies). Multiple attack options are available including weapon, magic, items, and summoning. Meis' backup posse can be called in for support and can also use projectiles and/or magic to aid in the battle. It is turn-based and ends up being a fairly workable fighting engine. It's easy to get accustomed to and adds some new features to combat like random taunts and power-ups from the rest of the company.

Anime fans will enjoy the graphics, as the characters, dating sequences, and most of the cut-scenes utilize hand-drawn Japanamion. At first, it looks kind of funny, only because the lush character design and the colors look incredibly bright on the earth-tone polygonal backdrops. The battles use 2D sprite characters on 3D backgrounds and feature choppy animations, while the rest of the interface utilizes full polygonal environments. They work well, appear clean, and with a customizable camera, it is fairly simple to get a view of the surroundings.









What makes Thousand Arms fun is definitely the dating aspect. While surely a bit on the cheesy side, all of the girls are looking for different things in their man, and you have a 50/50 shot of telling them what they want to hear. All of the dates have voiceover for the ladies who ask questions like, "Do you like Rocky Mountain oysters?" and "Do you love me?" When you read the answers, it becomes a sad commentary on just how easy it is to scam on girls; at the same time getting an answer wrong really hurts the ol' ego. Instead of dating you can always give presents or play one of the interesting minigames to add a little spice to the romance.

With two disks worth of women and gaming it is easy to see why this game should sit right with the guys. What it lacks is depth and the ability to grab you (although some of the girlies are truly hot, even for being two-dimensional).

SCORE:



87%

BOTTOM LINE

A true RPG for men, Thousand Arms lets us practice our pickup lines and save the world. Beautiful girls are nice, but they overshadow the story. Still, it's fun, rewarding, and unique enough to warrant checking out.

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Strategy
PUBLISHED BY:	Electronic Arts
DEVELOPED BY:	Westwood Studios
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now.

REVIEWED BY:
DILLION MERZ

EXrated

DUNE 2000

First ask yourself, have you ever seen Dune? If your answer is yes, then keep reading. If not, then move on to the next review because the Dune universe is this game's only redeeming quality.

A quick history lesson: Dune is a classic Frank Herbert novel made into a now-classic David Lynch sci-fi flick from 1984. It told the tale of a Messiah of sorts, who travels to a desert planet, Arrakis, to lead the natives in a rebellion against the evil Harkonnen empire. Arrakis is the only planet where the spice Melange can be found and he who controls the spice, controls the universe. As for the game, Dune 2000 is basically a port of last year's Dune 2000 for the PC which was widely regarded as a remake of the mother of all RTS's, 1993's Dune II. For the record, the PSX version's main difference from its PC counterpart is 3D terrain.

The storyline allows you to choose between three different sides, the good (House of Atreides), the bad (House of Harkonnen), and the ugly (House Ordos). The first couple of levels of each House are exactly the same, while the rest don't differ enough to offer new gameplay elements. Every level uses a desert map (it's Dune!) and the technology, buildings, and vehicles are identical until the later levels. When they do branch out, the attributes aren't quite special enough to warrant playing through the game with each House.

You will find there is a standard method for getting through levels — 1. collect spice 2. crank out attack vehicles 3. attack/defend. Unfortunately, there is no production queue, which makes manufacturing units cumbersome. In the later stages, a Starport will allow you to purchase units without having to go through manufacturing, a welcome advancement.

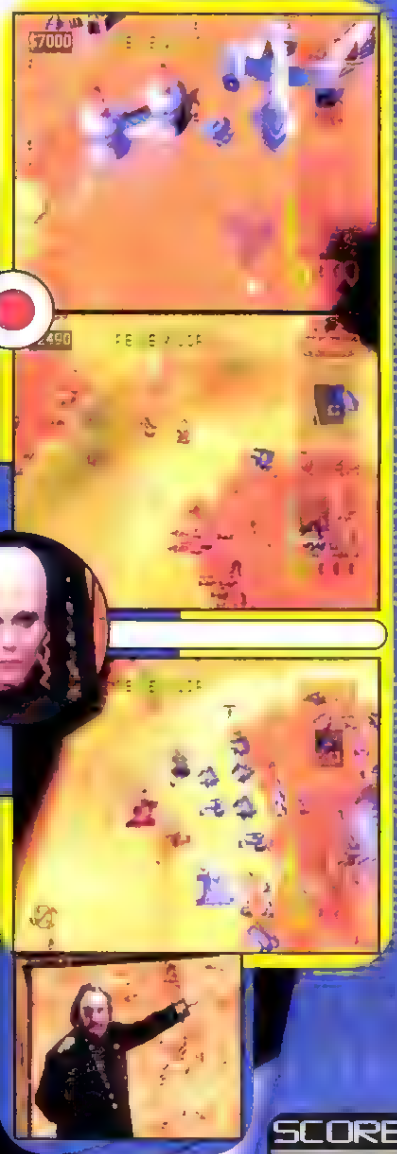
The in-game graphics are bland, with 3D structures and 2D desert backdrops. The camera comes courtesy of a locked top-down view. Having recently been spoiled by Warzone 2100, Dune hit me like sand in the face. There is no changing camera angles, zooming in/out, or zeroing in on a single unit. To its credit, Dune's interface is simple and intuitive. For those with a mouse, use it. For the rest of us confined to a Dual Shock, analog support works well and scrolling through menus quickly becomes second nature.

On to the AI. Your soldiers will make excellent appetizers for the sandworms native to Arrakis. With nature, as well as enemy forces to contend with, it would be nice to have some troops with an IQ. Instead, you get units that need to be babysat. Groups left alone usually become outnumbered and destroyed. Additionally, there is no guard-a-specific-object option, so units like the ever-essential spice harvester cannot be protected without scrolling over and finding it every time it's under attack.



The greatest thing about Dune 2000 is its pre-mission cinematics. Done with the same flair as the original movie, they are fun, interesting, and feature an astounding amount of production value. They provide insight into the different Houses and are the only reason to play this game. The story for the Atreides and Harkonnen remain true to the movie's plot, while the Ordos are given their own mysterious role.

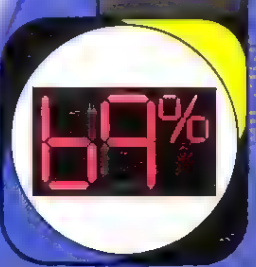
Lastly, there are deathmatch scenarios that can be set up against the AI or played via the PlayStation link cable against a friend. All options and settings can be customized in this mode; whoever produces units fastest will usually come out victorious.



BOTTOM LINE

Fans of the Dune movie/novels will love the game's cinematics. These provide the only real reason to sit through it. If you are in the market for a new RTS, check out Warzone 2100; it includes all the gameplay that Dune has plus a whole lot more.

SCORE:



COMPATIBILITY

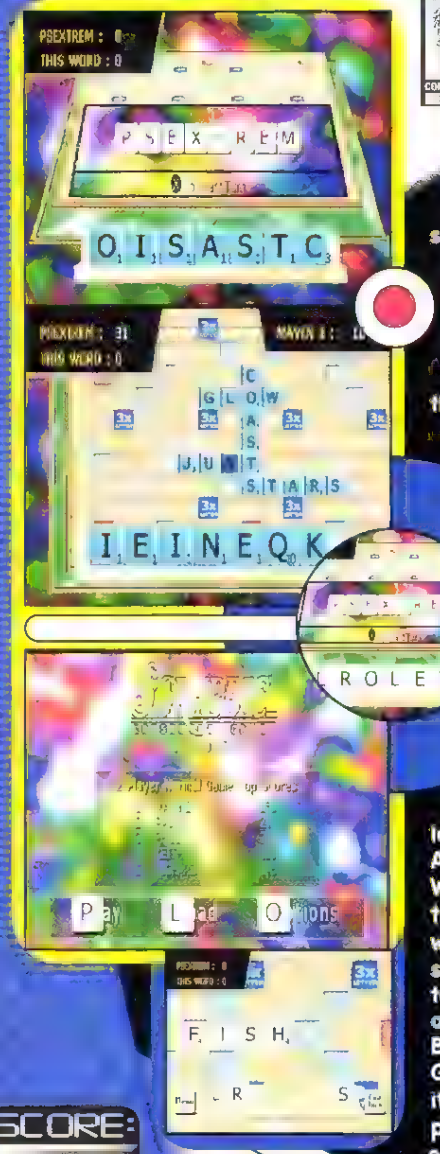
1 Player | Link Cable 2 Consoles | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ADAM PAVLACKA

SCRABBLE

GENRE:	Puzzle
PUBLISHED BY:	Hasbro
DEVELOPED BY:	Runecraft
ORIGIN:	US
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

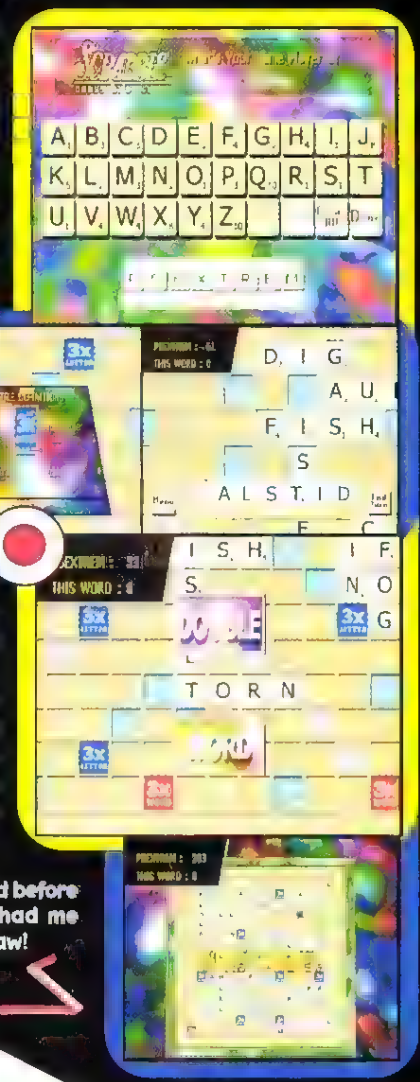
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



On the heels of Risk and Monopoly comes a PlayStation version of yet another classic board game — Scrabble, which celebrated its 50th Anniversary last year. This is good news for all those Scrabble enthusiasts who don't have friends or family members who are available (or willing) to play the game. On the other hand, technology is a mixed blessing. While it might be great to have a computer opponent who will play a game with you at 2:30 a.m., there is something to be said for playing against good ol' Uncle Ben who doesn't use the word "veinule" in everyday conversation.

PlayStation Scrabble, you see, has a dictionary automatically built in. No longer do you have to run to the dictionary to challenge a word — the game will disallow your imaginary grammar on the spot. I suppose this is a welcome addition for purists, but making up Scrabble words seems to be an American tradition. Not even just an American tradition — I once watched my Filipina mother-in-law and sister-in-law play a game in which more than 40% of the words they were using failed to make the pages of Webster's tome. Who wants to admit that they've never heard of a word? You allow it, and hope your opponent returns the favor.

When compared to Monopoly, or even Risk, Scrabble is definitely a more cerebral game. As such, there are not a lot of whistles and bells to this version. You've got a few basic options, such as exchanging tiles, adding a timer, and changing the color of the tile sets. In the game, you can ask for a hint or get a definition of the opponent's last word. You can even look up a word before you try to play it to see if the computer will recognize it, and Scrabble can be set on fast AI (an oxymoron since "AI" is plural for a 3-toed sloth, and how fast can a sloth be? But I digress...). There is not much audio or visual flair to the game — there is only one musical track, for example, and no novel board configurations or animated sequences.



Up to four human opponents can play, and you can also enter a one-player tournament or play a solitaire game where the object is to score the most points. The AI level of the computer can be set on one of eight difficulty levels — anywhere from Novice to Grand Master. And, yes, there is a difference in the level of play! When I played against the Grand Master, its first three words were "kedegeree," "seicento" (for which it scored 110 points by hitting two triple word score spaces), and finally "barege." My spell checker tells me that these words are incorrect, but who are you going to believe — Microsoft or Scrabble? By the way, after playing those three words the Grand Master led the game by a score of 203 to 63 and it went downhill from there. Thankfully, I was able to salvage my pride by playing a subsequent game against a Beginner level opponent — I quoned him real good!

I can see parents buying this videogame in an attempt to expand their children's vocabularies. It worked for me! After the initial noo, I was soon able to tosh and shog with the best of them. Even my wife got into the act — while she's never been nave with the most alarquid jerid, she definitely coigned her own ut and before long her zeins had me vexilled. Blaw!

SCORE:



BOTTOM LINE

There's really no way for the developers to go wrong with this game. It plays identical to the board game, with the added bonus of eliminating the hassle of dusting off that large board and locating all those pesky little tiles. If you want a good Scrabble challenge, here it is!

COMPATIBILITY

1 to 4 Players

GENRE:	Game Show
PUBLISHED BY:	Berkely Systems
DEVELOPED BY:	Starsphere
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	2
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

EXrated

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

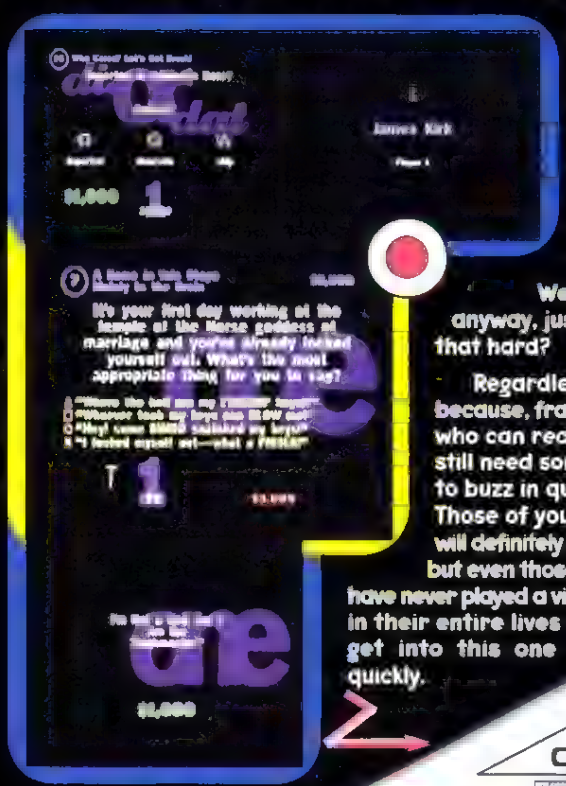
A few years ago, while most computer software companies were concerned with graphics accelerators and polygon counts, along came a simple PC title called "You Don't Know Jack." Despite the fact that the game featured only limited graphics and sound, it nevertheless became a successful franchise. How? The game managed to take a tired old format — the quiz show — and spruce it up for the modern MTV generation. Not only did the game skillfully combine pop culture references with facts from the arts and sciences, but the presentation provided a lot of laughs. The host was sarcastic, but never irritating, and the questions provided some risque humor. As the "Teen" rating indicates, YDKJ contains "comic mischief, strong language, and suggestive themes." It's about time!

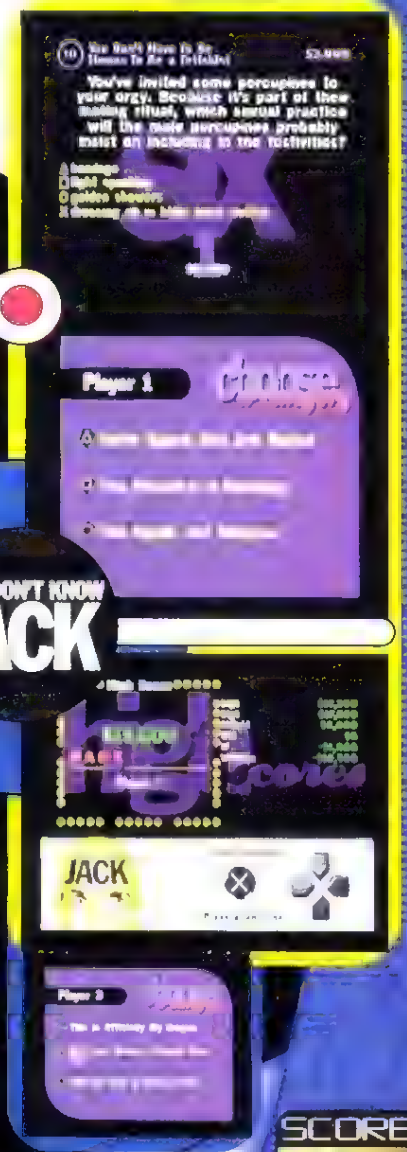
YDKJ would be a perfect title for future add-on disks in different categories — sports and movies, for example. Still, even if this collection is all we'll ever see, there are more than enough questions to keep players entertained for a long time — over 1,400 of them on 2 CD's (don't let the single disk case fool you). The odds are high that you'll be able to play a lot of games before the questions repeat themselves. And that is the key to a successful quiz game — you want players to keep coming back for more, anticipating that their experiences will differ each time. In this respect, YDKJ scores much higher than prior quiz game efforts. I know in my mind that everything the host says is pre-recorded and stored on a disk, yet my ears convince me that he is in the same room responding to what the players are doing.

Screen shots, obviously, cannot do the game justice, since much of the humor comes from the host's verbal wisecracking. Nevertheless, you can get a feel for the game from some of the questions. In order to add interest, the game varies the types of questions to include a "Dis or Dat," a "Three Way," and the "Jack Attack." A "Dis or Dat" question requires you to categorize between two possibilities — is "Burundi" a Star Wars character or an African nation? A "Three Way" adds one more category — is an "Aria" a wine, a woman, or a song? Finally, the "Jack Attack" requires you to hit the buzzer when one of the words flashing on the screen is related to the target word according to the clue given. For example, if the clue is "sidekick" and the target word is "Batman," you'll have to buzz when "Robin" appears. But beware — the game will try to trick you by throwing out related names, words, and phrases such as "cape and cowl," "Adam West," and "baseball."

Up to three people can compete simultaneously with the use of a multi-tap. So why not allow four players, since multi-taps have ports for four controllers? Better yet, how about 8 players for those of us blessed with two multi-taps? Such large contests wouldn't be for everyone, I realize, but at least the option could have been made available. We aren't talking about creating split-screens anyway, just additional button input. Would it have been that hard?

Regardless, YDKJ is THE party game for the PlayStation because, frankly, it isn't your typical videogame. Anyone who can read will be able to play, although you'll still need some level of coordination in order to buzz in quicker than your opponents. Those of you who are fast readers will definitely have an advantage, but even those weirdos who have never played a videogame in their entire lives can get into this one quickly.





BOTTOM LINE

While still fun as a solo effort, this is a game you'll want to play over and over again with friends and family. So, go ahead and pop it into the PlayStation at your next party! You might be amazed at how much Jack you don't know...

SCORE: 92%

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-3 Players

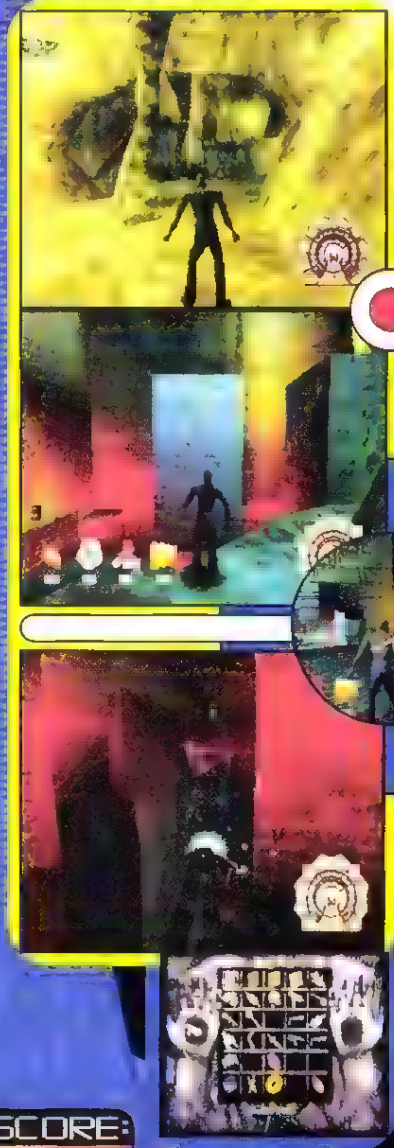
Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
CHRIS KRAMER

SHADOWMAN

GENRE:	Action Platform
PUBLISHED BY:	Acclaim
DEVELOPED BY:	Acclaim
ORIGIN:	UK
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOW!

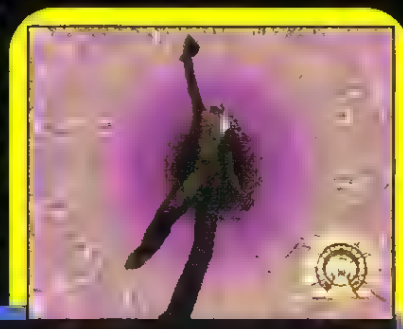
MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB



Here's how it breaks down: Shadow Man on the PC is great. Shadow Man on the N64 is OK. Shadow Man on the PlayStation is... yick, I don't even know what it is on the PSX, but it sure ain't good. Even Acclaim is obviously distressed by the PlayStation appearance of their newest hero – Shadow Man was a "stealth launch," which means that we didn't receive a copy of the game until sometime after it appeared on store shelves. When a company doesn't send you a gold master of their game they are either A) mad at you or B) ashamed of the game and want to get it out into stores before us evil game editors can pepper it with arrows of contempt. Since Michelle and Mike at Acclaim love us, I can only assume that it can only be answer B.

Here we find a perfect example of why a developer shouldn't try to share a single engine across multiple gaming platforms. Shadow Man was developed by one of Acclaim's UK studios (Teesside, to be exact), and began life on the PC and soon migrated its way down from there. What started as a solid 3D engine with an interesting look and feel (especially when played with a top-notch accelerator card) lost a lot of its luster as it had to be "dumbed down" to run on the little gray box. The biggest problem is the rampant seaming throughout the game, where you notice flickering lines between the polygons that make up the world. Nothing is less convincing in a 3D engine than seeing huge lines between textures.

By "lost its luster," I guess I should say "looks like crap" to make things a bit easier. The graphics are totally blown out; the textures are amazingly low resolution and it becomes nearly impossible to pick out fine details from the soupy environments. Most of the backgrounds suffer from the same problem that the original Quake did: everything is monochrome, either gray, brown or green. While the game is supposed to have an insane, "designed by madmen" look to it, I for one think that homicidal lunatics would be more likely to include just a few more hues in their palette choices.





The characters, from Shadow Man to the various parasitic souls, flying witchie women and misshapen beasties that populate Deadside, are lacking in polygons. This gives them a decidedly angular appearance that completely negates any benefits the "soft skin" technology may give them. Even with all these concessions made to the limitations of the system, Shadow Man's frame rate is still uneven, blipping back and forth as the frame rate chunks out when more enemies or large areas appear on screen.



As you've no doubt read by now, Shadow Man is based on one of Acclaim's comic books – like Turok and the upcoming Armorines, you've probably never heard of it before. Shadow Man is Mike LeRoi, the "hero," an assassin-for-hire transformed by Voodoo priestess Mama Nettie's magic into the Shadow Man. Mike has the ability to travel back and forth between the Liveside, where normal humans go about their affairs, and the Deadside, the dark world of troubled souls. It's in the Deadside where Mike comes into his own as Shadowman; he is able to wield powerful magical weapons, travel from place to place and is nearly invulnerable to harm. After all, what's the use of being Lord of the Dead if you have to worry about dying?



SCORE:

X

78%

BOTTOM LINE

The real kicker is that even thought it's still a fun game, Shadow Man is just so horrible to look at that you don't want to spend any time playing it. There's lots of stuff to do, an interesting story and loads of weapons and powers to find, but it's so gloomy, you give up in disgust before really getting into it. And the loading time between screens and levels is very, very long, which makes me wonder how this game got approved by Sony, who enforce strict guidelines in terms of load times. Although the gameplay is decent, Shadow Man definitely falls into the "Skip It." Category.

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Puzzle
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	The Mitchell Corp.
ORIGIN	Japan
# OF CD'S	1
AVAILABLE	NOW!

REVIEWED BY:
MARK ANDROVICH

EXrated

BALLISTIC

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

The best part of my job is not reviewing high-profile blockbuster games, or even their inevitable sequels, but finding an occasional "diamond in the rough" — an unheard of title which turns out to be something special. Guess what? I've found another one!

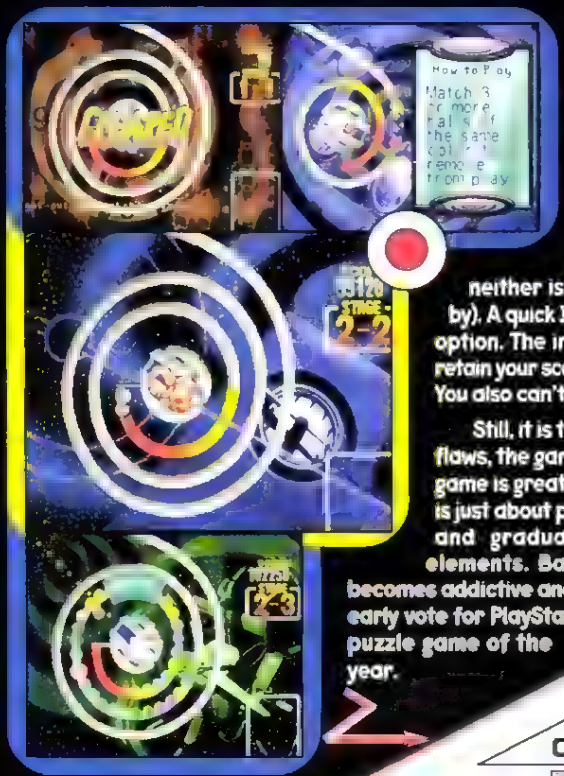
Ballistic is a fantastic puzzle game which deserves to get mentioned in the same breath as Tetris and Klax — it's that good! Like all great puzzle games, it is deceptively easy to learn. The object is to combine three or more of the same color balls in order to eliminate them before they reach your cannon. Sounds like Bust a Move, right? True, and with its cannon aiming guide it even looks similar. However, unlike BAM, in Ballistic the balls move on spiral tracks toward the center of the screen.

Right away, you'll discover that this new "twist" provides for some great action. For starters, every ball you fire which does not create a combination joins the line and makes it longer. You can't hit balls in the back of the line unless you open a gap in a closer loop. Additionally, the chain of balls stops moving temporarily when pieces are eliminated from the middle — giving you a breather and allowing you to focus. Finally, creating combos shifts the line of balls and requires you to readjust before firing your next shot.

The key strategic element of Ballistic is creating combinations. Whenever a group of similarly colored balls is destroyed, the adjacent balls come together. If three or more of these adjacent balls are of the same color, they will also be destroyed when they combine. Theoretically, this can continue until the entire line of balls is destroyed. Although you don't necessarily have to create combinations, you receive a bonus at the end of each level determined by the maximum number of combinations achieved.

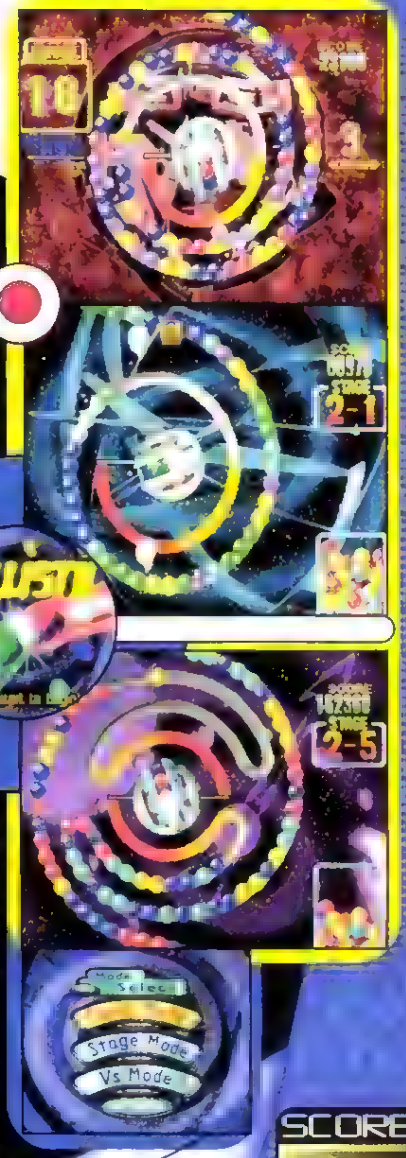
There are three different modes of play — Panic, Stage, and Versus. The Panic mode is basically a test to see how long you can survive as the speed of the balls continues to increase. The Stage mode advances you through different track configurations and adds extra elements such as treasure chests, bombs, clocks, snails, and tornadoes which affect gameplay when hit. Finally, the Versus mode is a standard two-player contest where making combinations adds to the length of your opponent's line and vice versa.

Graphically, Ballistic is plain but effective. Game elements are easily identifiable and the backgrounds have interesting clock, spiral, and number designs like something from the movie "Dark City." However, there is certainly nothing dark about the game (as its bouncy reggae soundtrack will attest). The overall look and feel is like an arcade game, and for good reason — Ballistic is a port of a Japanese coin-op called "Time Loop" which has been "spruced up" and renamed for the US market.



The game is not perfect. There is no puzzle mode, which seems like an easy addition, and neither is there a training mode (although text "tips" scroll by). A quick 180-degree "flip" button would have been a welcome option. The infinite amount of continues, and the fact that you retain your score when you continue, removes some of the challenge. You also can't view the high scores except after playing a game.

Still, it is to the designer's credit that, despite these flaws, the game is still fun to play. The two-player game is great, and the overall difficulty level is just about perfect — starting off easy and gradually adding newer elements. Ballistic quickly becomes addictive and gets my early vote for PlayStation puzzle game of the year.



BOTTOM LINE

There haven't been a lot of great new puzzle games lately. If you've been waiting for one, Ballistic should tide you over for a long time. As with all classics, the game is easy to learn, difficult to master, and definitely addictive.

SCORE:

90%

COMPATIBILITY

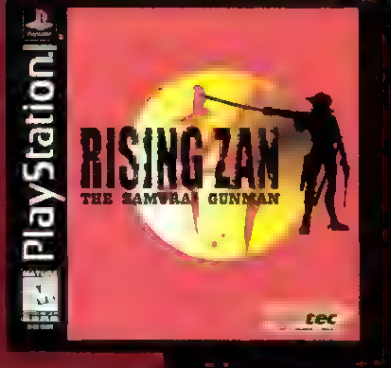
1or2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible


THE WILD WEST WAS
NEVER THIS
WILD!

Do you have what it takes to shoot and slice your way through 10 action-packed levels and become the "Super Ultra Sexy Hero"? Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman takes you back to the wild west of the 1800's where, armed with a gun, Katana sword, and some ultra sexy moves, you'll face a town full of the meanest, ugliest and weirdest hombres you've seen.

As you fight your way through this "sushi western" you'll solve puzzles, play mini games, deal with bizarre and deadly bosses, and earn those ever important "sexy points" you'll need to become the "Super Ultra Sexy Hero".

- Lots of 3rd person super ultra sexy action
- Use your six gun, Katana sword, or sexy combos to wipe out the bad guys
- Outrageous mini-games to play and puzzles to solve
- Hidden levels and characters
- Weird and bizarre enemies around every corner



"...QUIRKY LIKE NO OTHER GAME WE'VE EVER COME ACROSS"

–Next Generation

"...THE SORT OF OVER-THE-TOP ANIME SLASH-EM' UP THE ACTION GENRE HAS NEEDED..."

–Official PlayStation Magazine

"THIS GAME SEEMS TO HAVE IT ALL..."

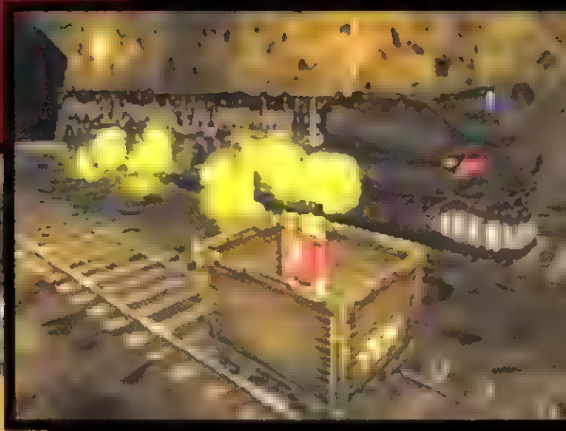
–PSM

"QUIRKY, OFFBEAT, UNUSUAL, BIZARRE, ODD, STRANGE, PECULIAR..."

–PS Extreme







PlayStation

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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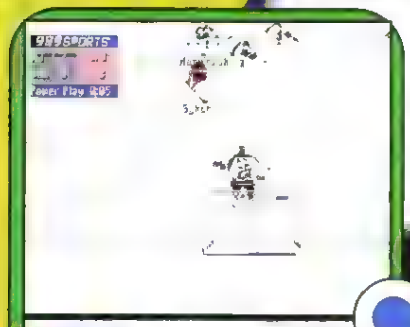
Agetec, Inc. 900 Veterans Blvd. Suite 600 Redwood City, CA 94063

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REVIEWED BY: **MARK WINDING**

NHL FACEOFF 2000

GENRE:	Hockey
PUBLISHED BY:	989 Sports
DEVELOPED BY:	Soleworks
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now





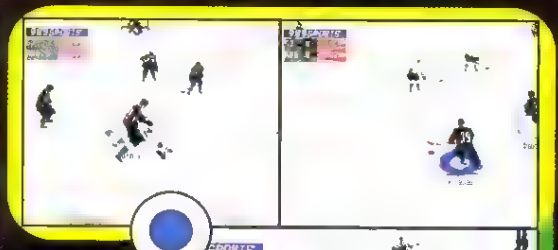


EVERYONE — CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

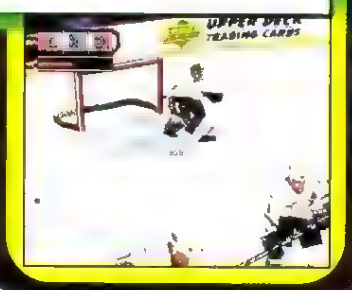
Hockey season is upon us, and this year PlayStation fans will have to choose between a couple of their old favorite titles, as well as a newcomer. As we have documented so very eloquently in the past, the sports franchises on the PlayStation have been pretty much set, in terms of technology, for the past couple of years, so you won't find much new in the graphics department for any of the titles. However, each year brings with it the promise of new features, animations, and an occasional gameplay twist. The first game to be dissected under the gaming microscope is 989 Sports' NHL FaceOff 2000.

I've been a big fan of the FaceOff series since FaceOff '97, and each year things have gotten better and better. Unlike EA's NHL series, which has undergone some pretty major graphic and gameplay changes each and every year, the FaceOff games have made consistent strides in simply improving the overall feel of the game. This year's version is no exception, as NHL FaceOff 2000 comes in with a familiar presence, but a laundry list of new additions (not all of which will be appreciated by the casual gamer). The first thing I noticed was the inclusion of hats being thrown onto the ice after one of my players scored his third goal. For whatever reason (developers in the past have told us that the NHL wouldn't let them show hats being thrown onto the ice), it's now OK to have this visual occur, and you'll also get a mention about it from the play-by-play and color commentators. The next new feature that smacked me upside the head like a pounding from Scott Stevens was the inclusion of Jumbotron animations and rink music like "Mony, Mony" (NOT the Billy Idol version), "Shout", "Wooly Bully" (who doesn't love Sam the Sham?), and many others. Yes, these are many of the same songs that 989 included for their NFL GameDay 2000 title, but none-the-less, I still couldn't help but have "Animal House" and "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" flashbacks upon hearing them! Speaking of the play-by-play and color, Mike Emrick & Darren Pang are back again this year to bring all of the action to you, and (no surprise) they do just as terrific of a job this year as they did last year.

Other new features and additions to the FaceOff experience include a ton (or 150, according to 989) of new animations. Most of the new ones that I have noticed have been in the form of goalie saves. The new "Action Cam" does a great job of keeping the action tight on the goalie after you shoot, and this results in being able to see the goalie make glove saves, high or low, and lightning quick stick saves. Other new animations include being able to check a player over the boards and tripping a skater to land on his face.







Gameplay-wise, most casual gamers will want to stick with the Veteran difficulty level, and you hardcore types will want to play on the All-Star level. One of the things that annoys me most, though, when playing on the All-Star level, is that the computer tends to score all of its goals the same way – deflections. I may win 3-2 or lose 4-3, but the computer scores every goal the same way. Also, I'm a bit disappointed that the FaceOff series hasn't been able to keep pace with the other sports franchises in terms of features. There's no fantasy league drafts, no coaching career modes, and the pregame menus don't offer any season specific information like who's hot, who's not, and who the team has been doing lately, or even any team comparisons!

SCORE: PS Chrome X

93%

BOTTOM LINE

If you've enjoyed the NHL FaceOff series over the years, then you're not going to be disappointed with FaceOff 2000 (unless you were looking for the features I listed above). The way I see it, if you want cleaner graphics, tighter control over your players, and the best animations and sound f/x, then you'll choose FaceOff 2000 as your hockey title.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players | Anal | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Football
PUBLISHED BY:	EA
DEVELOPED BY:	Kodiak Interactive
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

SPorts

WCW MAYHEM

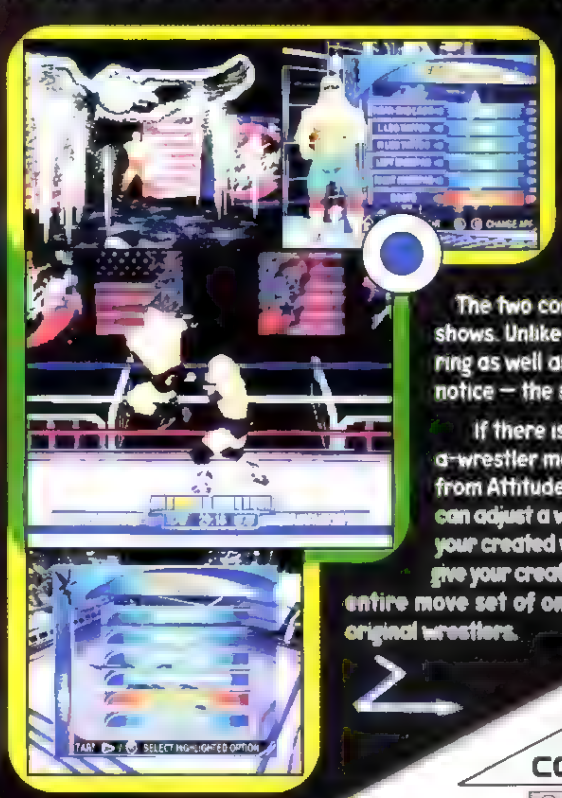
EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

From the flashy FMV intro to the commentary and swooping camera angles, Electronic Arts' WCW Mayhem does an incredible job of recreating the "mayhem" associated with watching WCW on TV. It features all your favorite WCW stars and then some. All told you'll be looking at over 50 wrestlers once you've unlocked them by completing the main career mode at different difficulty levels with different types of wrestlers.

Mayhem looks like your typical PlayStation wrestling title. The characters are a bit grainy and blocky, though the faces are modeled well. The fans are represented as static 2D boards, though the various arena's are accurately modeled. There are 15 different WCW ring sets including Nitro, Thunder, Saturday Night and all the PPV venues. Not enough that you can wrestle in the arenas? Head backstage! That's right, throw your opponent through or run through the archway and fight in 15 different backstage areas including a ticket area, first-aid room and a parking lot. If you have too much of an advantage the occasional run-in will occur. In a slight twist, every once in awhile, when you go into the backstage area, a wrestler and weapons will be waiting for you! Mayhem features some incredible motion capturing. Throw a punch? The opponent reels and grabs at his face. Hit him in the back? The opponent lurches away grabbing at his back. Over 600 motion captured wrestling moves are executed smoothly. With 4 wrestlers on the screen during tag team matches there is little to no slowdown. Even though the intro's aren't as flashy as their Attitude counterparts, each wrestler has an accurate taunt. Yes, Norman Smiley fans... the big wiggle IS in there.



WCW Mayhem borrows a few play mechanics from THQ's old wrestling title, WCW Revenge. You have a momentum meter that builds as you execute moves. Once the meter is full you'll be able to execute your wrestler's finishing move. Also like Revenge, Mayhem features single button press moves. You grab your opponent with one button press, and then depending on the next button press and direction of the d-pad, you will execute a specific move. While this approach may seem simple to some, this kind of move system ensures fast and furious gameplay. Mayhem features your standard modes: single, 2 on 1, triangle, 4 way, battle royal, tag and single career mode (termed "Quest for the Best"). Within these modes you can also adjust the rules to include pin anywhere, Raven's Rules, and No DQ. Quest for the Best plays similar to Acclaim's WWF: Attitude career mode, in that you work your way up through the ranks competing for each title culminating with your successful Heavyweight title defenses.



If there is truly a crowning achievement to Mayhem, it's the commentary by Tony Schiavone and Bobby Heenan. Over 8,000 lines of dialogue have been crammed into the title and it's absolutely amazing. The play by play is smooth, precise and Bobby Heenan is oftentimes quite funny. The two commentators play off of each other just as they do during the real TV shows. Unlike Attitude, though, they actually talk about the wrestlers in the ring as well as the moves that are being executed. All future titles take notice — the standard for wrestling commentary has been set!

If there is a slight downer in Mayhem, it's the create-a-wrestler mode. In most instances it is a step back from Attitude's incredible flexibility. While you can adjust a wide range of attributes for your created wrestler, you can only give your created wrestler the entire move set of one of the original wrestlers.

BOTTOM LINE

Mayhem is how WCW TV should always be — lots of options, wrestlers and action. If the Create-A-Wrestler mode allowed you to select individual moves, then there would really be no major faults in this title. Hopefully the developers will address this in the sequel as well as adding a tag team Career mode. For now, WCW Mayhem is THE PlayStation title to own. Let the Mayhem begin!

SCORE:

94%

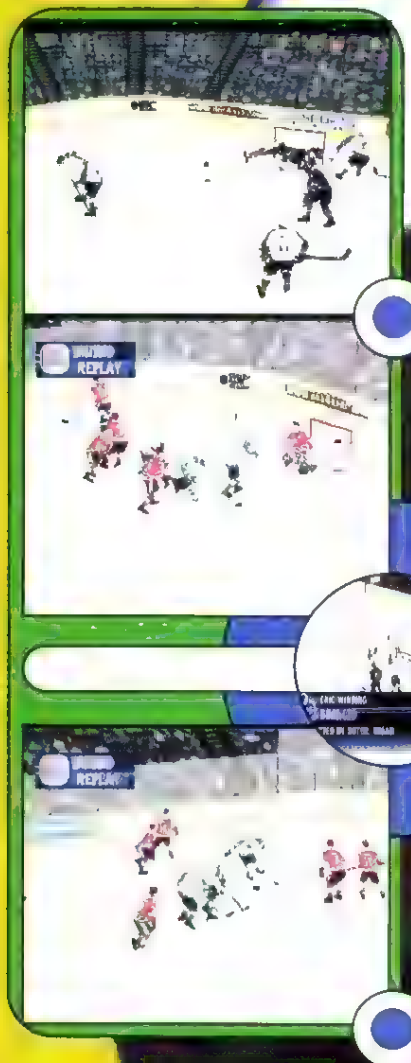
COMPATIBILITY

1 to 4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

GENRE:	Hockey
PUBLISHED BY:	EA Sports
DEVELOPED BY:	EA Sports
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

NHL 2000



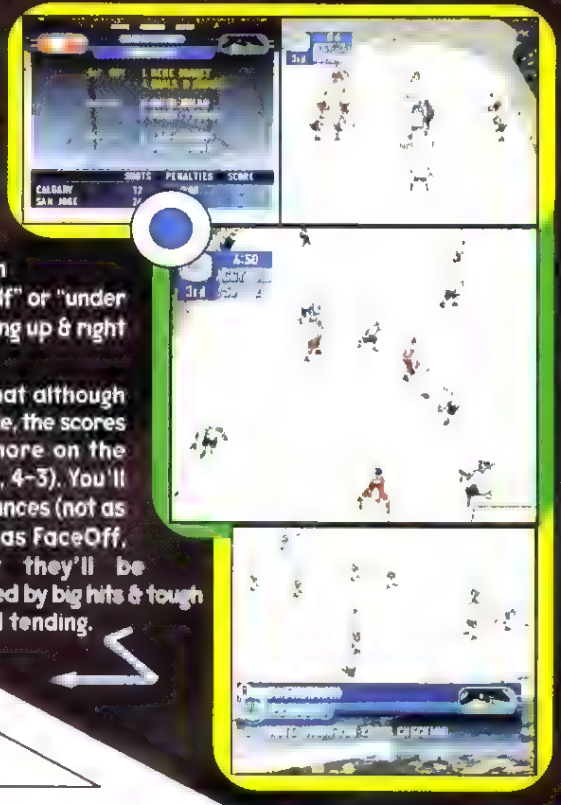
EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

If you just finished reading my review of 989 Sports' NHL FaceOff 2000, then you'll know that I gave that game a hearty recommendation. Well, guess what? For the first time since the 16-bit days, I'm also giving EA Sports' NHL game (in this case, NHL 2000) a favorable recommendation. Read on and find out how I came to this earth-shattering conclusion!

EA Sports didn't do a major overhaul of the game like they have over the past several renditions. Instead, they focused on a few select gameplay areas and tweaked the game until they came up with something they thought would be comparable to their hockey glory years of the early nineties (on the Sega Genesis). Well, I'll let you be the judge of that, but what we have in NHL 2000 is a fun-playing, quick-paced contest that also provides excellent computer AI. In my opinion, the only areas that could use some fixin' are in the graphics department and with the player control, but more on those things later.

One of the areas that EA Sports touched on was in the games' speed. Last year, and in pretty much all of the NHL iterations, the players skated about sluggishly, the puck crawled over the ice like it had bubble gum stuck to the bottom of it, and the animations seemed to be choppy and missing frames. NHL 2000, on the other hand, is easily the fastest moving hockey game around, as the players just fly around the ice like they got jet propulsion packs attached to their backs. This is mostly a good thing, but it also means that the players don't stop as quickly as you would like them to, and thus you often find yourself out of position to get to the puck or the opposing player who's got the puck! Another area that is greatly improved is the passing. I've been harping for an "icon passing" system for the NHL series for years now, and EA finally put one in! However, now I don't find myself using it because the standard passing works so smoothly. How's that for irony? Simply pointing in the direction of the player that you want to have the puck and hitting the pass button is all that is required to accurately get the puck to a teammate. In FaceOff, you'll need to use the Icon Passing system if you want to really be accurate with your passes.

The last area that is a welcome change from last year is that the computer AI is more sophisticated, and will offer a better challenge for the experienced players. For instance, if the computer gains a man advantage on you, you'll see it run powerplay formations designed to move the puck around and catch you out of position for a better scoring opportunity. However, speaking of scoring, when the "shot aim" option is set on the "manual" position, getting the puck "top shelf" or "under the stick" is not as easy as it is in FaceOff. You may be pushing up & right on the d-pad, but the puck gets launched left & low.



In the end, what's interesting to note is that although NHL 2000 plays much faster and arcade-like, the scores at the end of the game will be more on the simulation side of things (3-2, 4-3). You'll have plenty of scoring chances (not as many breakaways as FaceOff, though), but they'll be neutralized by big hits & tough goal tending.

SCORE:



92%

BOTTOM LINE

So, NHL 2000 has FaceOff 2000 beat in the area of computer AI and gameplay speed, but it still falls a bit short in graphics and player control. However, this year, the game to choose really does depend on your personal gameplay preference. You can't go wrong either way.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Basketball
PUBLISHED BY:	FOX Sports Interactive
DEVELOPED BY:	Radical Intertainment
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

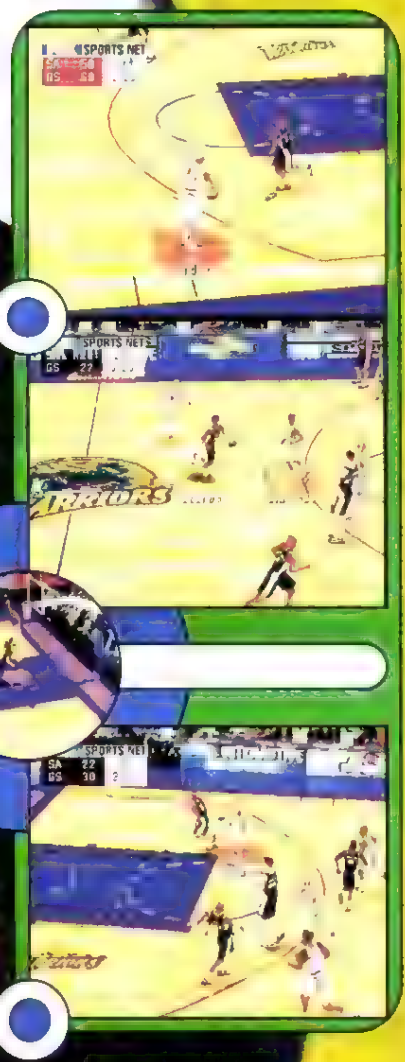
NBA BASKETBALL 2000

EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

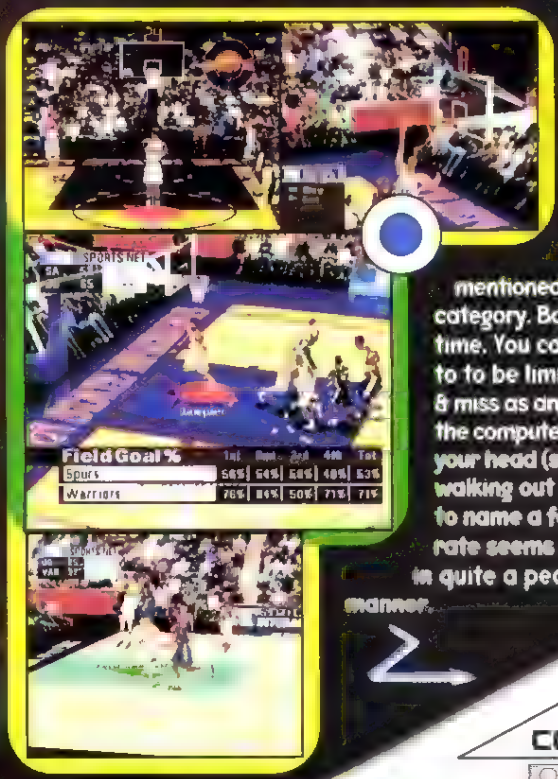
You've read the previews, now it's time for the ultimate judge to make the ultimate decision on the new hoops game in town. Can't waste space on the background info, so hopefully you've been reading the last few issues of PSExtreme (particularly, the October issue), so you already know all of that stuff.

The one thing I won't be able to do with NBA 2000 is compare it with the "other" two hoop games due out this year, because I haven't even got a sniff of them yet. However, we can compare with hoop games of the past, and odds are we'll get most of it right. Right? Right.

Let's start with some of the more positive aspects of this FOX title, shall we? First off, the game is very polished. It has a professional look to it, from the hi-rez gameplay graphics to the detailed and animated menu screens, everything says quality. The features list also is top notch, and won't make you believe that you're playing a "first year" hoops title. There's a practice mode that takes place out on the playground, complete with a chain link fence, boom box and passing cars. There's also the more conventional simulation and arcade gameplay styles. Basically, the arcade mode only differs from the sim mode in that there's no fatigue or injuries occurring in arcade mode. There are no over-the-top dunks or crazy antics of any kind. Heck, there's even fouls in arcade mode (although, you can go into the options menu and turn them off). The stats database is pretty deep, keeping track of just about everything there is to keep track of, even a DPG stat – that's "dunks per game". Sweet.



Probably the two biggest things that NBA Basketball 2000 has going for it are the play-by-play commentary and the automatic camera zoom-ins. Greg Papa, arguably the best TV/radio guy in the business, and Doc Rivers call the action during the game, and they rarely take a moment to catch their collective breaths! If it's not a comment on a pass or basket, they'll ask you a little trivia or give you some interesting tidbits on one of the players on the court. Granted, Papa gets a little too excited for some common plays, but overall, the broadcasting element to NBA hoops is excellent. As far as the camera action is concerned, FOX does a terrific job in a couple of areas. When the computer knows that your 3 pointer (or his) is going in, it will cut to a behind-the-shooter view that lets you see the ball swish in from 25 feet – very cool. Also, on random dunks, the camera will zoom in and give you different close-up perspectives of the play. And lastly, there are numerous instant replay f/x that bring the FOX Sports TV experience home to your gaming console.



Now, the bad news. Unfortunately, for all of the positive things mentioned above, NBA Basketball doesn't deliver in the almighty gameplay category. Basically, if you can get to the key, then you'll score – every time. You can't block shots to save your life (the players seem to to be limited to a 6" vertical), the rebounding is as hit & miss as any hoops game before it (usually, it's MISS), the computer AI oftentimes leaves you scratching your head (shooting behind the backboard, walking out of bounds with the ball, to name a few), and the frame rate seems to chug along in quite a pedestrian manner.

BOTTOM LINE

Probably the biggest single flaw with the game is that it doesn't bring any new gameplay elements into the mix. Live 2000 will have the 50+ great players from the past, and Shootout 2000 will have the amazing create-a-dunk feature. There's just no "hook" in NBA Basketball 2000. It looks good & plays ok, but that may not be enough for the hardcore hoops player.

SCORE:



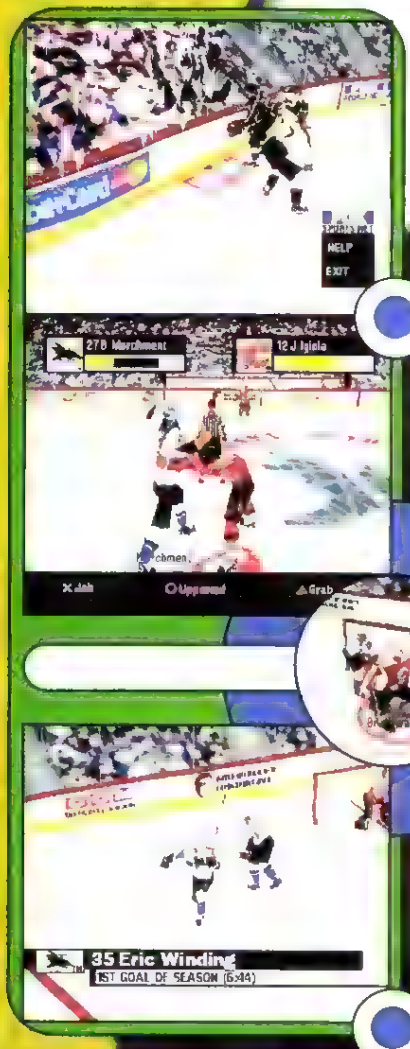
COMPATIBILITY

1 to 4 Players | Vibration Function Compatible | Analog Control Compatible

REVIEWED BY:
ERIC WINDING

NHL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000

GENRE:	Hockey
PUBLISHED BY:	FOX Sports Interactive
DEVELOPED BY:	Radical Entertainment
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

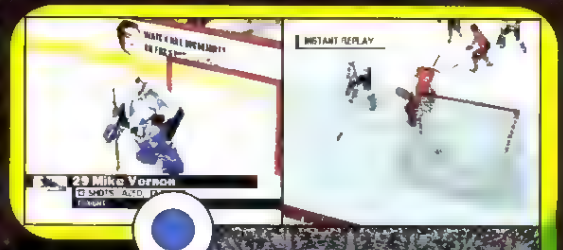


EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Sports game #2 from FOX Sports Interactive comes to us in the form of NHL Championship 2000. Although the game is a better effort than their NBA Basketball 2000 title, the competition in the hockey arena is much stiffer, as both NHL FaceOff 2000 and NHL 2000 are both excellent titles. NHL Championship 2000 is set up in the same manner as is the FOX hoop game, making navigation through the menu screens quick and painless. If you want to start your season, simply click on "Game Type" and you'll be able to either start a new season, continue an existing one, go straight to the playoffs, participate in a head-to-head series (3, 5, or 7 games), and finally, compete in a World Tournament. Other features in the game include an extensive stats database, a create-a-player option, multiple camera settings, and a workmanlike instant replay feature. The one noteworthy item about the create-a-player mode is that you'll have an unlimited number of attribute points to spread around your players' different categories (letting you make a '99'), as opposed to 989 & EA's games, where you are limited to the total number of points you have to distribute. Other than that, NHL Championship 2000 has got just about all of the options and menu screen features that you would expect to find in a hockey sim.

In terms of gameplay, FOX's game falls a bit short of the other two games on the market. The passing system is probably the main culprit, as there is no "icon passing" system (although FOX has it in the hoop game), and the system that's there isn't as accurate as it needs to be. EA's NHL 2000 passing works great without resorting to the icon passing mode, as the puck generally gets to the intended teammate. However, the same can't be said in NHL Championship. The problem is twofold: First, the directional pad or analog stick is sloppy, and although you may be pushing to the right when you pass, the puck may end up going up or even down; secondly, the passes are generally really SLOW passes that tend to get easily blocked or stolen by a defensive player before the puck gets anywhere near the guy you sent it to. Seems like an easy enough fix for next year!

Play-by-play and color commentary are provided by Kenny Albert and John Davidson. Davidson has some pretty funny lines ("Big man fall down – go boom"), and Albert says all the right things. Unfortunately, he's usually about 5 seconds behind the play. As far as graphics, I'd rate NHL Championship 2000 ahead of NHL 2000, but behind NHL FaceOff 2000. There are plenty of terrific goalie animations, and the big hits are pretty amusing. Heck, you can even send a guy THROUGH the glass after a massive hit! And, the plexiglass bends and shakes (just like it does in FaceOff). The skaters sometimes overanimate, in an arcade-like fashion, but I thought it was pretty cool.







What I didn't think was cool was the frame rate on the Rookie & Pro difficulty settings – it's painfully slow. If you're a veteran hockey game player, then you're really going to want to bump the difficulty level up to All-Star. It's quick, responsive, and feels more on par with NHL and FaceOff. The computer provides a decent challenge at this level, although its AI isn't as in-sync as NHL's.

SCORE:



87%

BOTTOM LINE

NHL Championship 2000 is a good playing game of hockey. It looks good, plays fast, and suffers from only a few hiccups. Unfortunately, the competition is a bit better. A few more options (like a fantasy draft or a training league) could have helped this title stand apart from the crowd.

COMPATIBILITY

Multi Tap Adaptable 1-4 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

GENRE:	Horse Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	Tecmo
DEVELOPED BY:	Tecmo
ORIGIN:	Japan
# OF CDS:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

REVIEWED BY:
DARIEN ALLEN

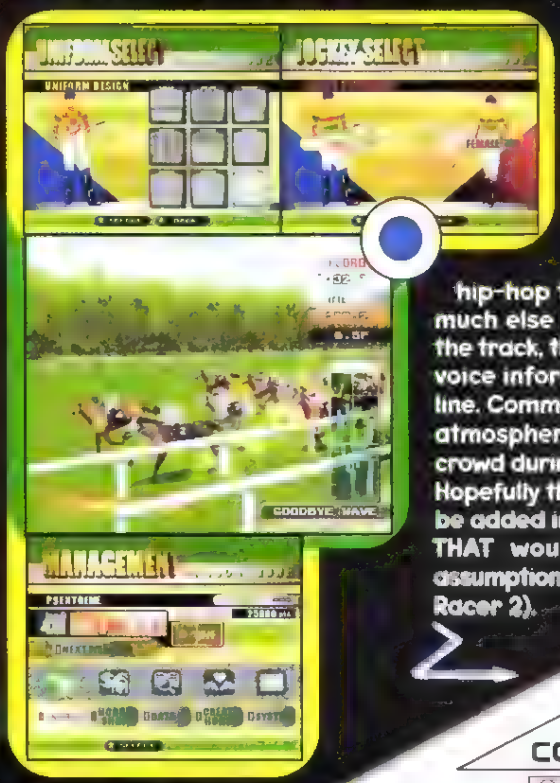
GALLOP RACER

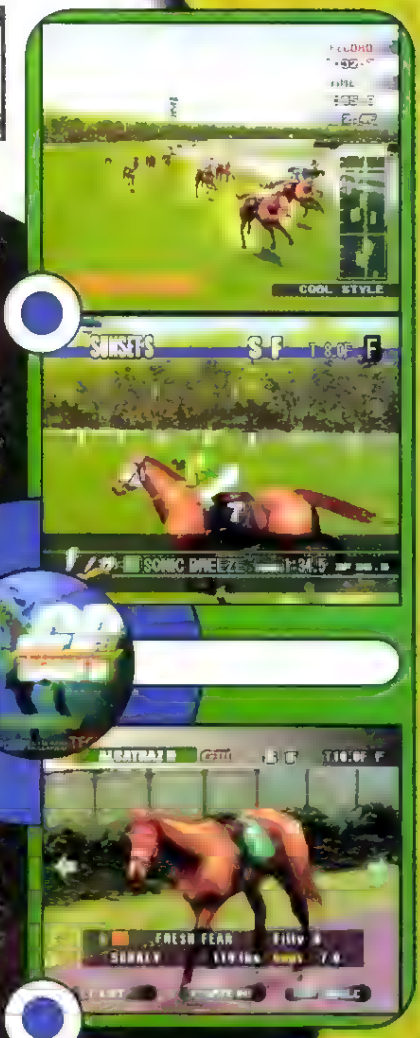
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

In a first for the US market, Tecmo brings to us the horse racing simulator Gallop Racer. I have to admit I was a bit apprehensive when I first booted up this title. A horse racing game? How much interaction would that involve? Would I have to clean my horse's stall? From its high quality opening FMV intro to its smooth hip-hop soundtrack, Gallop Racer has a lot to prance around about. It is light on options, but what is available is put together very well.

Gallop Racer features only a few basic modes: Practice, Season and Vs. Mode. Vs. is the obligatory split-screen 2-player race. Practice Mode allows you to race different horses, modify track conditions for those racers, or if you prefer, set up and watch a race! (I felt like I should be heading to my nearest Off-Track Betting location). Season Mode is the core of this title – it is here that you will spend most of your time. It's week #1 and you start off with $25,000. You need to purchase a horse (male or female), select a jockey (then edit the jockey's outfit by changing its pattern and selecting different colors), then find a race your horse qualifies for (based on age, gender, etc.) and then it's "off to the races". Still, there is a bit more detail to it than just those gameplay options. There are also various pages of stats on the horses you can purchase. At a glance you can see the purchase price for your horse, you'll see ratings for how well your horse races different kinds of tracks, as well as the stamina rating for your horse.

Graphically, Gallop Racer is top notch. During the race, while the backgrounds are a bit sparse, all of the horses can be seen on-screen with no noticeable slowdown. They, along with jockeys, are textured and animated very well. On a dry course they even kick up dirt! Various track conditions, such as rain, are represented fairly well. During the race you also have the choice to view the action from various perspectives, starting with an almost top-down view to a setting that is just behind the jockey. You can even slightly pan the camera to either side to get a better view of your horse and his or her opponents. Dual Shock vibration is supported, so you'll feel your horse's change in speed and see on-screen the decrease in the stamina bar.





If there is anything that is missing from Gallop Racer to truly recreate the feeling of being at the track, it's in the sound department. While the smooth hip-hop track quietly hums along in the background, there is not much else but the sound of the horses' thundering hooves on the track, the sound of the riders' whips, and the occasional voice informing you of the distance left to the finish line. Commentary would have really added to the atmosphere, as would have the roar of the crowd during and at the end of the race. Hopefully this is something that will be added in future titles (now THAT would be a big assumption – Gallop Racer 2).

BOTTOM LINE

Gallop Racer is unique in the U.S. PlayStation lineup and is definitely a niche title. While it's short on options it's long on recreating the feel of owning, racing and breeding these thoroughbreds. Although it's unlikely to create any new equestrian fans, those of you who enjoy a day at the races (and just also happen to own little gray boxes) may find Gallop Racer worth checking out.

SCORE:



COMPATIBILITY

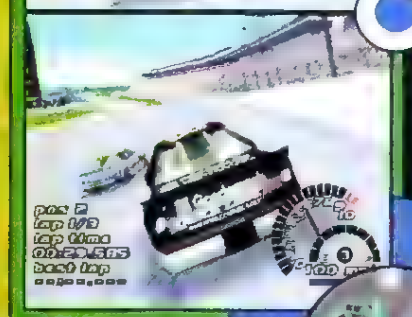
1 to 4 Players
Vibration Function Compatible

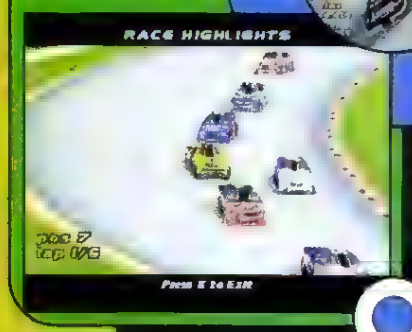
REVIEWED BY:
MARK WINDING

GENRE:	Racing
PUBLISHED BY:	EA Sports
DEVELOPED BY:	Stormfront
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	Now

NASCAR 2000







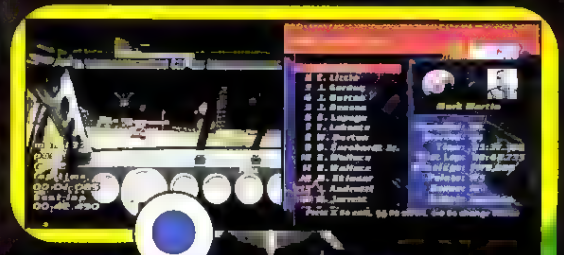


EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Rather than spending a lot of time trying to figure out why EA Sports would be bringing out yet another NASCAR game, let's just begin this review by saying last year's game wasn't needed, so this year's game is already starting off on the wrong foot. If you recall our review of NASCAR '99, we pretty much summed it up by saying that EA added a few new courses and some new lighting effects as well as some visual polish, but that didn't warrant a purchase unless you didn't get the first game. I could end this review right now by saying the exact same thing, but for the benefit of those of you out there that haven't seen or played any of the previous versions, I'll continue.

NASCAR 2000 is as accurate a representation of the sport as can be found on a console system. All of your favorite drivers are in the game, including Jeff Gordon, as are all of the tracks from the regular NASCAR season. You can customize the experience until your heart's content, creating your own driver, race length, car characteristics, and even custom seasons that allow you to stack your favorite type of track. You name it, you can customize it. Additionally, in this year's version you can race against some NASCAR legends, Richard Petty, Cale Yarborough and a number of others. You will also see new high res car models and animated pit stops as well as a two-player season mode.

As you can see, EA continues to tweak this game year after year; the problem is, it doesn't really change the experience all that much. NASCAR 2000 is a very solid racing game with a ton of variety and enough challenge to make you want to come back. At the risk of sounding redundant, however, the same was true of '98 and '99 as well. Why should I buy this game you ask? Simply put, the only reason to buy this game is if you don't have either of the previous two versions. Being a fan of NASCAR is absolutely the wrong reason to buy it. That's what the developers are counting on; that you mindless dolts will buy anything with the NASCAR license slapped on it. This is bad for you and the industry. Although I firmly believe there are very few truly new concepts in videogame design, being a fan of a license instead of a smart consumer will only make the developers fat and lazy.







Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with NASCAR 2000, the broadcast quality, high res graphics and the ability to customize the game any way you want make for a great experience, I just don't think we need a new version every year. I think a better approach would be to alternate every other year with a game like Andretti Racing, which would go a long way in keeping the license fresh and the consumer excited about the product. After three straight years of NASCAR Racing, I think we're all looking for something a little different.

SCORE:



BOTTOM LINE

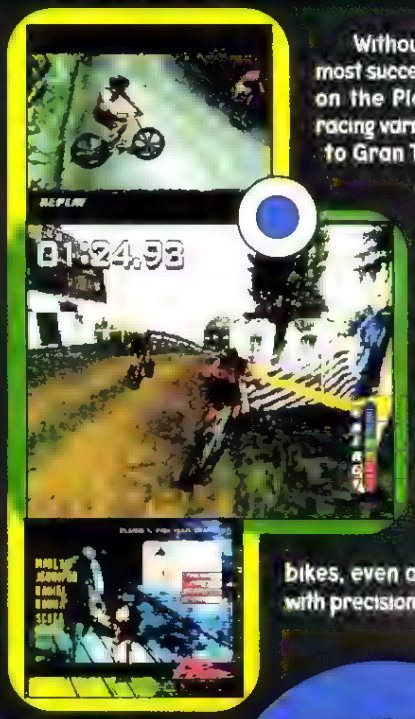
The bottom line is that EA Sports has made another quality, if not uninspired, NASCAR racing title. Much like the WCW/WWF licenses, the NASCAR license carries a lot of weight with consumers and will continue to sell videogames to fans of the genre. If, on the other hand, NASCAR fans become true videogame enthusiasts, EA will be forced to do more than a modest tweak every year, less the license loses its appeal.

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players | Analog Control Compatible | Vibration Function Compatible

DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

GENRE:	Extreme Sports
PUBLISHED BY:	Codemasters
DEVELOPED BY:	Codemasters
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	October

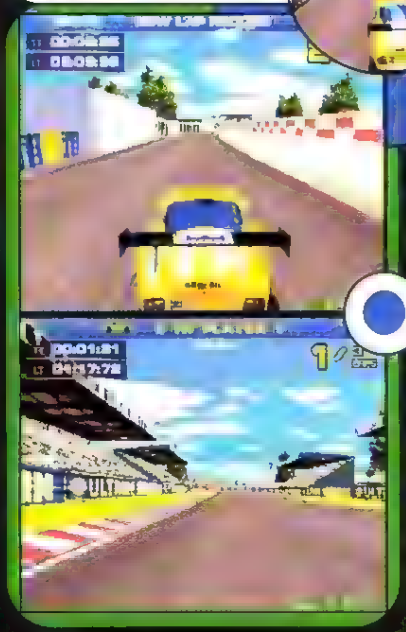


Without a doubt, the most successful genre of games on the PlayStation has been the racing variety. From the Ridge Racer series to Gran Tourismo, the PlayStation has seen some pretty incredible titles in all categories of racing. Not leaving well enough alone, Codemasters is set to release the newest entry into the crowded racing field. No Fear Downhill Mountain Bike Racing is set for a Fall release. That's right, we said mountain bike racing. Like most racers, you'll have your choice of a variety of different riders (8), 25 trails including Telegraph Hill in San Francisco, four different camera angles and the ability to pull off a variety of tricks with your bike. Why mountain biking you ask? The simple answer is that motocross and skateboarding games have done very well on the PlayStation and mountain biking seems to be the only stone left unturned. At this point, the game looks pretty impressive, combining surprising speed with extremely detailed tracks. The bikes, even at this early stage, are very responsive and react with precision to even the slightest tug on the controller. The game will be distributed by Activision and is slated for a November release. We'll bring you more info and a full review in our blockbuster December issue.

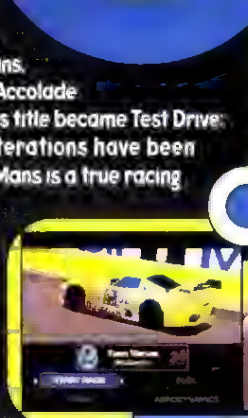


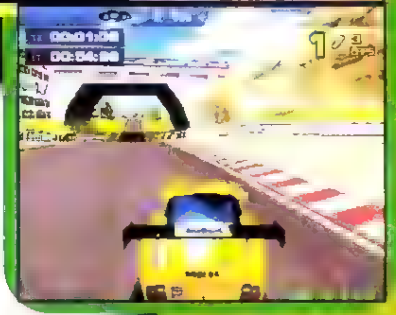






The venerable Test Drive series will be adding a new sibling to its lineup this Winter in the form of Test Drive: LeMans. The product is a result of the merging of Accolade with Infogrames, thus the LeMans 24 Hours title became Test Drive: LeMans. While the previous Test Drive iterations have been very arcade-like in their performance, TD: LeMans is a true racing sim. Obviously, the game is based on the famous 24-hour LeMans circuit. You'll have your choice of three different racing categories, GT1, GT2 and prototype, as well as three different modes of play, including arcade, simulation or LeMans Endurance Championship. There are 48 cars, over 16 in each race, and 24 teams to choose from. Although you have your choice of gameplay style, the emphasis is definitely on the sim side. As LeMans is a 24-hour event, you can expect varying weather conditions, day and nighttime driving as well as mechanical fatigue factors such as tire wear and oil and fuel consumption. You can expect a two-player split screen mode as well as dual shock compatability. Look for more information next month as well as a full review in the January issue of everybody's favorite PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme.



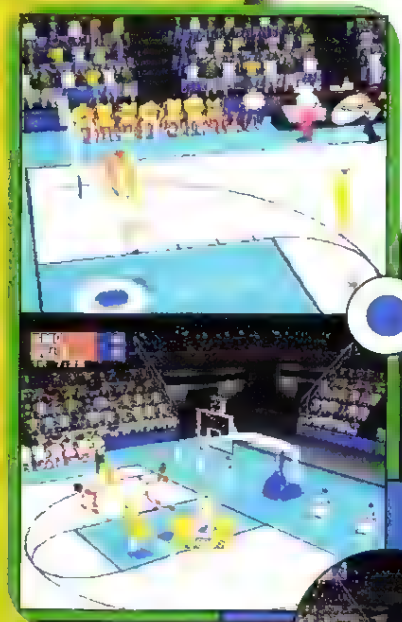


TEST DRIVE: LE MANS

GENRE:	RACING
PUBLISHED BY:	Infogrames
DEVELOPED BY:	Eutechnyx
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOVEMBER

NCAA FINAL FOUR 2000

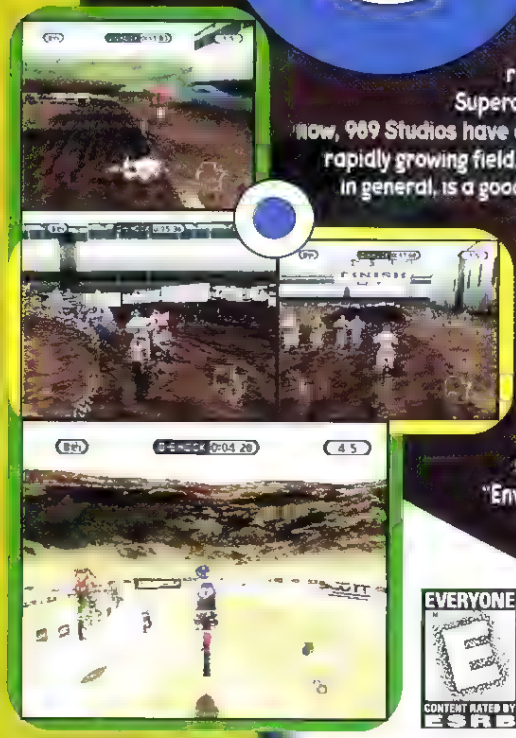
GENRE:	BASKETBALL
PUBLISHED BY:	989 SPORTS
DEVELOPED BY:	KILLER GAMES
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	November

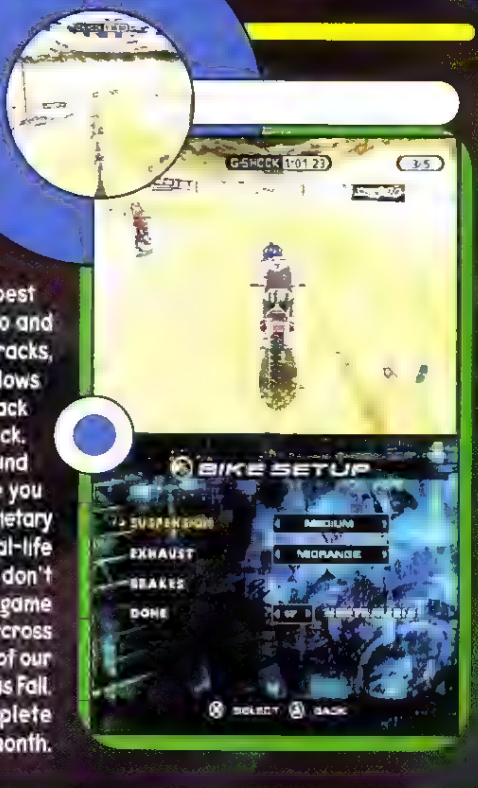






As College basketball season approaches, so do the related videogames. Our favorite in the series, NCAA Final Four from 989, is set to release the latest installment this November. This year's version includes over 300 Division 1 teams, new player models, new animations, play-by-play from ESPN's Quinn Buckner, a new create-a-player option and a whole host of other enhancements designed to keep NCAA Final Four a couple of steps ahead of the pack. You can expect to see the players represented in their actual height/weight ratios and designed to play to their actual abilities. Paul Pierce from the University of Kansas is being used for the majority of the motion capturing. The "6th man" meter is back, allowing you to fire up that home town crowd, as well as animated crowds, chants and fight songs. The college game has come a long way on the PlayStation; expect this version to be the best yet. We'll have a complete round up in an upcoming issue of Phil Collin's favorite PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme.





Not to be left out in the cold, 989 Studios is gearing up for a late Fall release of their new Supercross title, Supercross Circuit. Acclaim, THQ, EA Sports and now, 989 Studios have all thrown their respective hats into this rapidly growing field, which if you're a fan of the sport, or genre in general, is a good thing indeed. We generally don't editorialize in the preview section, but this game looks fantastic!!!! The game features some of the best known names in sports including Mike LaRocco and Larry Ward as well as 20 indoor and outdoor tracks, eleven bikes, and a customize feature that allows you to create your own bike; not to mention, a track editor which allows you to create your own track. As you would expect, there is also a proving ground that allows you to practice the basics before you start in on your career. 989 is also touting their proprietary "EnviroFX" technology that is supposed to emulate real-life track conditions over the course of a race. We don't know much about the technology, but the game is coming together very nicely. Supercross Circuit has easily become one of our most anticipated titles this Fall. Look for a complete review next month.

SUPERCROSS CIRCUIT

GENRE:	EXTREME SPORTS
PUBLISHED BY:	989 SPORTS
DEVELOPED BY:	1000 MINDS
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	NOVEMBER

MTV SPORTS: SNOWBOARDING

GENRE:	SNOWBOARDING
PUBLISHED BY:	THQ
DEVELOPED BY:	Radical Entertainment
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	October

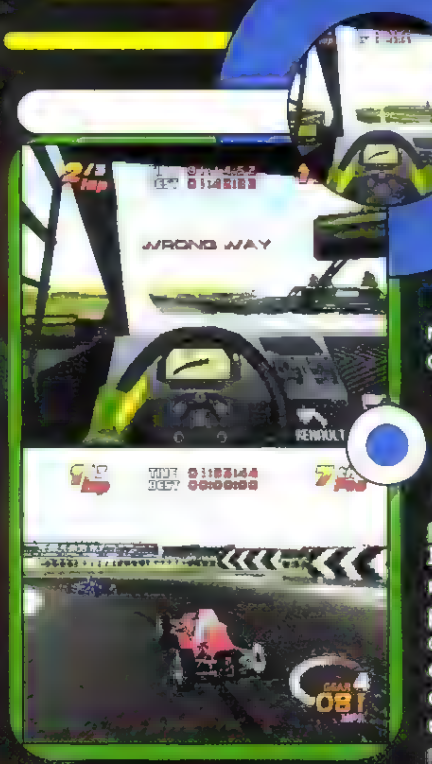


As Fall turns into Winter you can usually count on a couple of things. The first is an increase in your heating bill, and the second is a whole slew of snowboarding games to come out for the PlayStation. This year, THQ is going to throw their hat in the ring with MTV Sports: Snowboarding. We're still trying to figure out the licensing tie-in here, but let's just say, it's a demographic thing! As we go to press, the game is around 70% complete and looks to be on track for an October release. The game features seven different snowboarders, 46 built-in tricks, five different events and five game modes. Of course, with the MTV license behind it, you can expect some of today's "hottest" bands to accompany your ride. Music from Blink 182, Ministry, Fear Factory, Face to Face are all in there plus a whole host of others. To round out the entire MTV experience, you'll find licensed equipment and apparel. K2, Forum Boards, Planet Earth and DC Shoes have all lent their names to the collective effort. There's big competition in this category and THQ has gone a long way to differentiate themselves. Only time and PSExtreme will be able to tell for sure if they've hit their mark.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB







Codemasters, the developers of the Micro Machines franchise for Midway and the TOCA racing title for 3DO has decided to go it alone in the United States this year and release three new PlayStation titles in time for the all important holiday shopping season. The first title, Touring Car Challenge, is an evolution of TOCA Racing, released by 3DO last year. If you don't remember the title, it was based on Europe's very popular touring car racing circuit. While a relatively solid title, it didn't do much with US gamers. This year, Codemasters has sought to tune the game for a more "American" appetite. They are doing this by keeping all of the sim elements that make the game so deep, but have eased off a little on the difficulty level, giving US gamers what they want most: the opportunity to go fast for extended periods of time. The game features 10 different tracks, 23 different cars and seven different modes of play. Our first test lap with the game was pretty impressive; the car models are highly detailed and the overall frame rate is fast enough to satisfy even the most demanding speed freaks among us. Look for a complete review next month.



EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

TOURING CAR CHALLENGE

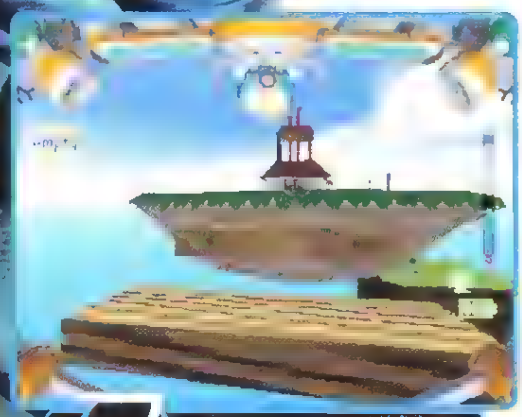
GENRE:	RACING
PUBLISHED BY:	CODEMASTERS
DEVELOPED BY:	CODEMASTERS
ORIGIN:	USA
# OF CD'S:	1
AVAILABLE:	OCTOBER

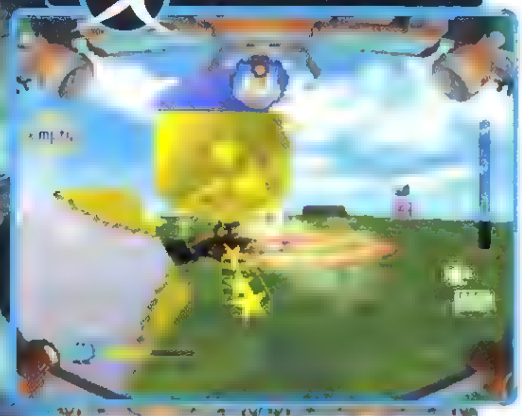
probability of u.s. release: likely

title: robbit mon dieu

publisher: scej

non-english text content: low











There are two types of PlayStation gamers out there. First off, there's the cool, hip gamers who bought both Jumping Flash and JF2, played them to death and loved every minute. Then, there are the other four people who accidentally bought PlayStations because they thought it was some new kind of blender. Jumping Flash is one of those very rare games that can induce conniption fits of gooshy glee amongst the average video game editor. It's up there with Parappa in terms of Love Vs. Sales — the games garnered lots of the former, but very little of the latter. Most of us never expected to see another Jumping Flash game, so we were extra-happy when we found out last month that, indeed, a third title was in the works. In fact, during our little excursion to Japan in September, we were even lucky enough to score a playable demo of Robbit Mon Dieu: Jumping Flash 3.

Despite giving the game a fruity French name, Robbit Mon Dieu is still seventeen secret herbs and spices kind of good. The essential mechanic of the game remains true to form; you jump — a lot — really, really high. Robbit, your rocket-powered bionic bunny avatar, is the King of the High Jump, leaping tall buildings with a triple bound. In fact, Robbit is now grabbing bigger air than ever before, as he now comes standard equipped with a triple jump. Pressing the jump button at the apex of your ascent, will boost Robbit upwards; in the last two outings, you were able to get a single boost to increase your vert but, in JF3, you've got





dual boosts to pop you up even higher.

Of course, with those super-high jumps comes the inevitable return to the ground. True to Jumping Flash style, as your vertical climb peters out, your viewpoint suddenly shifts from a forward perspective to one pointed straight down. Navigating your falls safely is one of the key elements to this game, and is used for everything from leaping from one tall platform to the next, to taking on certain bosses, to steering your way through a series of rings. The sight of the ground rushing towards you can be very unsettling and I'm happy to report that JF3 produces the same dizzy vertigo that the other JF games produced.

Some folks wrote off the Jumping Flash games as little more than "Doom with platforms," since the gameplay was usually quite simple — shoot things and jump to high ledges. Instead of simply dumping you in a level and making you search for the objects to effect your escape, Robbit Mon Dieu looks like it's going to have a greater range of play styles going for it. The diversity of the levels have you trying to accomplish many types of objectives, from delivering a lost fuzzy critter to his home, to knocking flying birds out of the sky. There's still plenty of shoot-'em-up involved, but it's great that the designers, this time around, have you doing more than looking for an exit. Although Sony has yet to make any announcements about Robbit Mon Dieu's future in the United States, we're certainly itching to slap this game into our PlayStations.

GREG

probability of u.s. release: likely

title: star ixiom

publisher: namco

non-english text content: low

The funny thing about Namco's Star Ixiom is that it feels a lot like an update of a really old computer game. No, not Wing Commander, although the roots of Origin's long-running sci-fi series are definitely here. I'm talking about a game so old that I hesitate to even mention it in the pages of PS Extreme. The game is Star Raiders, which I first played on the Atari 800 personal computer, although it also came out for the 2600, with a special keypad controller. The first time I played Star Raiders had to be sometime in the late Seventies, which, I guess, makes it perfect pickins for a 3D update.

While I thought Star Raiders was one of the best games of its day, that day happened towards the end of the Decade of Disco, nearly twenty years ago. Games have matured since then (but I haven't), so essentially copying the gameplay of yesteryear really isn't going to do too much for you, now.

Wing Commander comparisons are not far off, either (that series owes a debt of gratitude to Star Raiders as well). In Star Ixiom, you pilot a heavily-armed spaceship, diving into danger to protect the United Galaxy Space Force's various planets and star bases. You're given commands while in-flight — and during combat, which is really annoying — which direct you towards the next object under attack. A host of alien races are fairly intent upon wiping out your bases and it's up to you to protect them.

Your map relays information about the various locations in your sector, showing you where the known enemy craft are and which bases are under attack. Clicking on the blinking icon will show you how much strength is left in the base or planet's shield; sometimes you've got to skip over one besieged location in order to defend an ailing ally. As the game picks up speed, the strategy involves juggling nearly-wasted bases against each other, as you warp from one side of the universe



to the other to help the weakest one.

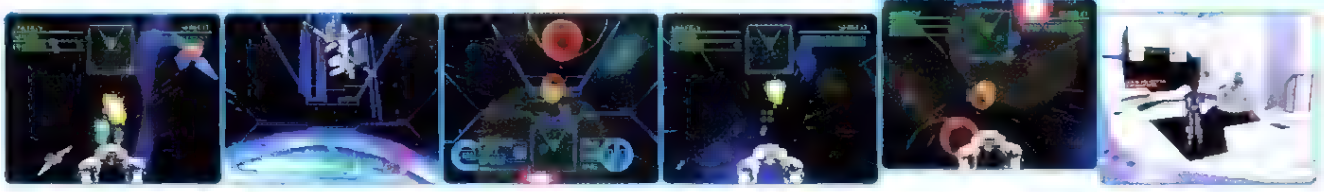
Namco included a semi-RPG aspect, to impart at least a bit of polish to this update. Of course, this part of the game also seems to be the least impressive and feels like it was haphazardly added into the mix just because something new was needed. When you dock at the main base, you're able to enter the space station and walk around inside, interacting with some of the characters in a very limited fashion. The 3D characters are not very detailed, but when you enter into conversation, nice 2D drawings of each person pop up with their dialog box in order to show who's speaking. You have to return to your base frequently, as it's the only way to repair and refuel your ship.

Of course, the real drawback to Star Ixiom is its action elements. Even though it sports a fairly nice 3D engine (it's no Colony Wars, mind you), the play is slow and painful. Your craft doesn't exactly turn on a dime; it doesn't even turn on a manhole cover. Response from your ship is sluggish, at best, which makes it a real hassle to turn and go after an enemy craft that's just flashed past you. On the whole, I was disappointed with this game and hope that, if plans are made to bring it out in America, the gameplay is heavily modified.

GREG







EXcavate

the PS Extreme historical ranking chart

The *EXCAVATE* section is where we dig up ratings from past issues and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	SCORE
Syphon Filter	March 1999	99%
Ape Escape	July 1999	98%
Dino Crisis	October 1999	98%
Final Fantasy Anthology	October 1999	98%
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	September 1999	98%
NFL GameDay 2000	October 1999	98%
Pac-Man World	September 1999	98%
Street Fighter Alpha 3	June 1999	98%
GOLD GAMES	**ISSUE**	**SCORE**
Croc 2	July 1999	97%
Final Fantasy VIII	October 1999	97%
NCAA GameBreaker 2000	October 1999	97%
Bloody Roar 2	May 1999	96%
Civilization II	March 1999	96%
Gex 3: Deep Cover Gecko	May 1999	96%
Jade Cocoon	August 1999	96%
Akuji: The Heartless	February 1999	95%
Bugs Bunny: Lost in Time	August 1999	95%
Omega Boost	October 1999	95%
Star Ocean: Second Story	June 1999	95%
Abe's Exoddus	February 1999	94%
Fighter Maker	June 1999	94%
Legend of Legaia	April 1999	94%
Need for Speed: High Stakes	May 1999	94%
Ehrgeiz	May 1999	93%
Madden NFL 2000	October 1999	93%
MLB 2000	June 1999	93%
NFL Blitz 2000	September 1999	93%
R-Type Delta	August 1999	93%
Sled Storm	October 1999	93%
WWF Attitude	October 1999	93%
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete	July 1999	92%
NCAA Final Four 99	March 1999	92%
Point Blank 2	April 1999	92%
Tai Fu	April 1999	92%
Tiny Tank: Up your Arsenal	August 1999	92%
Warzone 2100	July 1999	92%
Baseball 2000	June 1999	91%
Rollcage	April 1999	91%
Tarzan	September 1999	91%
Driver	September 1999	90%
Echo Night	August 1999	90%
Freestyle Boardin' '99	March 1999	90%
Guardian's Crusade	April 1999	90%
Ridge Racer Type 4	April 1999	90%
Silent Hill	March 1999	90%
The Next Tetris	May 1999	90%
Um Jammer Lammy	September 1999	90%
SILVER GAMES	**ISSUE**	**SCORE**
Army Men 3D	May 1999	89%
Championship Motocross	October 1999	89%
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	October 1999	89%
Rising Zan: The Samurai Gunman	September 1999	89%
Tail Concerto	October 1999	89%
Contender	February 1999	88%
NFL Xtreme 2	September 1999	88%
WCW/NWO Thunder	February 1999	88%
Castrol Honda Superbike Racing	July 1999	87%
Mr. Domino	February 1999	87%
Rush Down	April 1999	87%
Uprising X	February 1999	87%
Jet Moto 3	October 1999	86%
Ultimate 8 Ball	July 1999	86%
Chessmaster II	August 1999	85%
Destrega	February 1999	85%
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	October 1999	85%
Monaco Grand Prix	May 1999	85%
RC Stunt Copter	October 1999	85%
Soul of the Samurai	September 1999	85%
Fisherman's Bait	April 1999	84%
Konami's '80's AC Special	September 1999	84%
Populous: The Beginning	June 1999	84%
Triple Play 2000	May 1999	84%
Grand Theft Auto: London, 1969	June 1999	83%
NCAA Football 2000	October 1999	83%
Rampage 2: Universal Tour	May 1999	83%
K1 Revenge	March 1999	81%
All Star Tennis '99	June 1999	80%
Blast Radius	February 1999	80%
Irritating Stick	February 1999	80%
Shadow Madness	May 1999	80%
BRONZE GAMES	**ISSUE**	**SCORE**
Centipede	July 1999	79%
Juggernaut	September 1999	79%
R Types	March 1999	79%
Street Sk8er	April 1999	79%
Alexi Lalas International Soccer	August 1999	78%
Nectaris: Military Madness	February 1999	78%
The Phantom Menace	October 1999	78%
Chocobo Racing	September 1999	76%
Dead in the Water	February 1999	76%
Monkey Hero	March 1999	76%
High Heat Baseball 2000	July 1999	75%
Psybadek	February 1999	75%
Suikoden II	October 1999	75%
Bomberman Fantasy Race	May 1999	74%
Sports Car GT	June 1999	74%
Xena: Warrior Princess	October 1999	74%
3Xtreme	June 1999	73%
In the Zone 99	May 1999	72%
G.Police 2: Weapons of Justice	October 1999	71%
Big Air	May 1999	70%
Bust-a-Move '99	April 1999	70%
NCAA March Madness 99	February 1999	70%
TIN GAMES	**ISSUE**	**SCORE**
Pro 18 World Tour Golf	April 1999	68%
Evil Zone	September 1999	41%

what do all those numbers mean?

98-100%
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90-97%
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Good games, but lacking in some area, only for fans of that style of game.



70-79%
Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent – don't buy.



0-69%
Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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NEED WE SAY MORE?

exit

final word



THE FAT LADY IS ON FIVE...

It is Monday, September 20, 1999 and I have just come back from Japan. Of course, I was there to see the unveiling of the second coming from Sony. PlayStation2, as it has been, and will now officially be called, was demonstrated to the Japanese press and a dozen or so Americans that were lucky enough to be in the Land of the Rising Sun, to witness the event. This wasn't hype; it was hands-on time with an actual development station and the PS2 was there in the flesh (well, actually black plastic). Ken Kutaragi and his team have been thinking light years beyond the competition and have delivered what I believe to be the ultimate home entertainment system. Think about it: within four years, PS2 will have an installed base in the US of over 20 million users — penetrating into 1/3 of the households in America. There is no way that DVD players, at their current price, are going to make this kind of inroad into the living room, nor will any competing video game system. And, even at reduced prices, they are not going to get into homes quicker than PS2. Why buy a DVD player at $300 when you can get a DVD player AND PS2 for the same money?

Of course, this doesn't even begin to consider the fact that PS2 is the most sophisticated video game platform, that the world has yet to see. The possibilities seem almost limitless. Imagine "A Bug's Life" or "Toy Story 2" being developed for the big screen and the interactive screen at the same time, with the same assets. What you watch in the theater you can play at home — with the same rich detail and graphic excitement. All you have to do is look at GT 2000, Dark Cloud, Tekken Tag Tournament, The Bouncer, etc., to get an idea of what I am talking about. Heck, you could buy the DVD and get a playable demo of the game, or the additional elements that were developed for the game could be carried over into the next movie. Will it happen? I don't know, but it is now technically possible.

If you are Sega (or Nintendo), how do you compete with this? I am sure that most of you are aware of the technical problems associated with the Dreamcast's launch, bad, very bad. When your ability to compete is already limited by your economic and technical position, a shoddy launch, replete with software and (if you believe what is being posted on the internet) hardware bugs, is virtual strike three. Personally, I have had NFL 2K crash on me after three quarters of play on three different occasions, always preceded by random sound effect glitches, Hydro Thunder won't work with the VGA adapter (although all of the other games from Midway will) and it gives you a message telling you so, and I haven't been able to save to the VMU (the $25 add-on that NFL 2K fills up all by itself). So, what I said would happen has come to pass: the Dreamcast is nothing more than a gotta-have-everything gamer's stop-gap until PS2 arrives. Mark my words; you will start to see all of the video game magazines drop the Dreamcast like a hot potato. There is a new hardware story to tell and it is far more interesting. The PS2 sets a new technical standard that is unlikely to be bettered by any of its competition, with DVD and backward compatibility for all of the existing PlayStation households, and games from all of the world's top publishers; all bringing me to one undeniable conclusion... PS2 is the future of home entertainment. Turn out the lights... the party's over!

Dave
dwinding@quake.net

Next Issue

Volume 5 — Issue 1

in the issue

On the cover



Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage

We owe you some serious apologies this issue. Due to time constraints and the last-minute PlayStation 2 information from Japan, some of the articles, features and walk-throughs we were working on had to be left on the cutting room floor. What would you rather have, eight pages packed with first-hand PlayStation 2 specs, games, screen shots, publishers, developers and information, or eight pages of a walkthrough that you can get on the net? That's what we thought. In any event, we promise to include all of the relevant stuff next issue, as well as even more PS2 tidbits and goodies now that the floodgates have been busted wide open.

Exclusive



Gran Turismo 2

On The Cover!
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage



Exclusive



More PS2 info and games!

Excerpt



We talk to Matt Stone and Trey Parker, creators of South Park (we promise)

Exclusive



Mission Impossible

Exclusive



Ace Combat 3

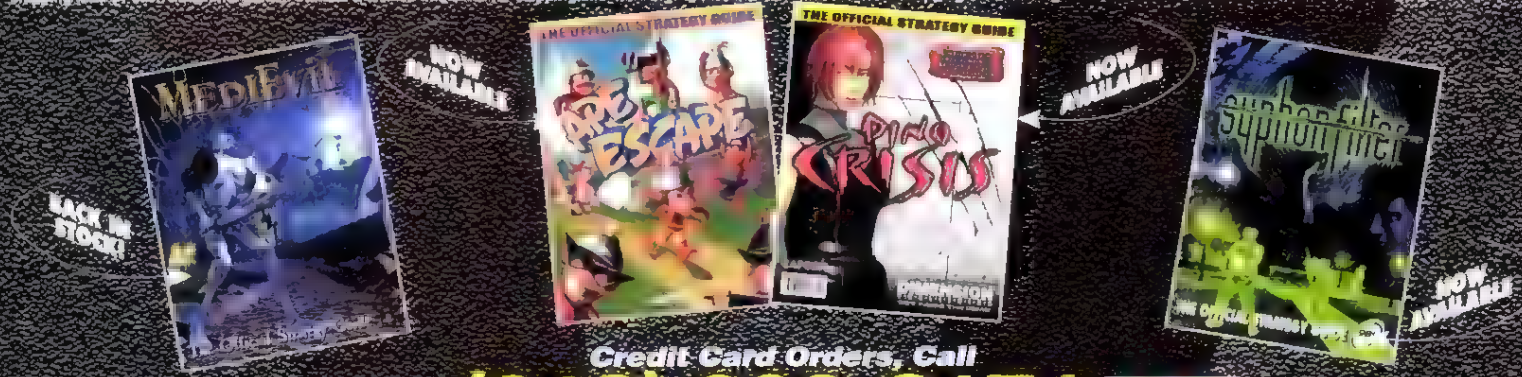
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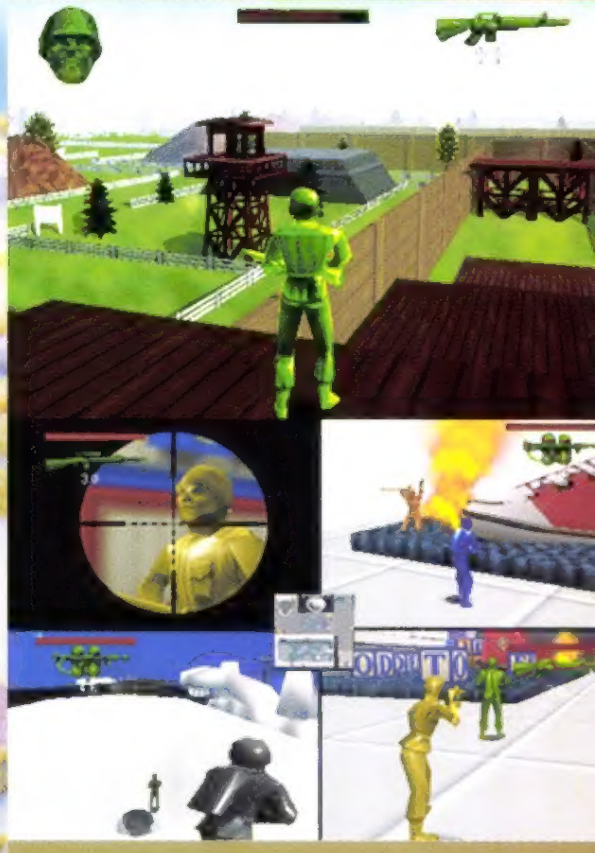
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